SEPTEMBER '65



Brig. (Retd.) A.A.K. Chaudhry H.J.

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BEFORE AND AFTER

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Brigadier (Retd.)
AMJAD ALI KHAN CHAUDHRY
Hilal-e-Jurat

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This book is dedicated to all ranks of 4 Corps Artillery on whose performance in the September '65 war the then President F.M. Ayub Khan wrote :—

By all accounts the part played by the 4 Corps Artillery can only be termed as magnificent. The results they achieved are miraculous for which they deserve congratulations and gratitude of us all.

13/11

FIELD MARSHAL MOHAMMAD AYUB KHAN
PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN
13-11-65

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MAPS

ABBREVIATIONS

A.K.	Azad Kashmir
Arty.	Artillery
B.M.	Brigade Major
Brig.	Brigadier
Bde.	Brigade
Bty.	Battery
C.O.	Commanding Officer
Comd.	Commander
D.M.O.	Director Military Operations
Div.	Division
Fd.	Field
F.D.L.	Forward Defense Line
F.O.O.	Forward Observation Officer
G.O.C.	General Officer Commanding
G.H.Q.	General Headquarters
G.S.O.	General Staff Officer
H-Hr	Exact time at which attacking troops break cover and move forward
Hows.	Howitzers
Hy. Regt.	Heavy Regiment
I.A.F.	Indian Air Force
Loc. Regt.	Locating Regiment
L.A.A.	Light Anti-Aircraft
Med. Regt.	Medium Regiment
P.A.F.	Pakistan Air Force
Pdr.	Pounder

UNIT NAMES

ARTILLERY	UNIT NAMES
1 (S.P.) Fd. Regt.	1 (Self Propelled) Field Regiment, Artillery
2 Fd. Regt.	2nd Field Regiment, Artillery
8 Med. Regt.	8 Medium Regiment, Artillery
10 Med. Regt.	10 Medium Regiment, Artillery
15 (S.P.) Fd. Regt.	15 (Self Propelled) Field Regiment, Artillery
16 (S.P.) Fd. Regt.	16 (Self Propelled) Field Regiment, Artillery
17 Corps Loc. Regt.	17 Corps Locating Regiment, Artillery
27 Fd. Regt.	27 Field Regiment, Artillery
28 Med. Regt.	28 Medium Regiment, Artillery
29 L.A.A. Regt.	29 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Artillery
31 Fd. Regt.	31 Field Regiment, Artillery
33 Hy. Regt.	33 Heavy Regiment, Artillery
34 Hy. Regt.	34 Heavy Regiment, Artillery
39 Fd. Regt.	39 Field Regiment, Artillery
111 L.A.A. Regt.	111 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Artillery
INFANTRY	
3 F.F.	3rd Battalion, the Frontier Force Regiment
7 F.F.	7th Battalion, the Frontier Force Regiment
9 F.F.	9th Battalion, the Frontier Force Regiment
14 F.F.	14th Battalion, the Frontier Force Regiment
2 Punjab	2nd Battalion, the Punjab Regiment
1 Baluch	1st Battalion, the Baluch Regiment
20 Baluch	20th Battalion, the Baluch Regiment

FOREWORD

The short history of Pakistan is full of trials and tribulations, but by the grace of Almighty God our people have emerged stronger from every trial and every crisis with renewed faith in the nation's destiny.

I believe that the defence of our country is not a matter for our armed services only. Our people should be equally interested in all aspects of the defence of their country and should be conversant with the general set up of their armed forces. They should study the performance of their armed forces in the past in order to have an awareness of the major problems of the defence of their country. Our students should be afforded the opportunity to study strategy, tactics and military history in our higher seats of learning as is being done in some well known universities in advanced countries. Wars are no longer fought in the trenches only. Wars are fought today in every important field of national activity and it is the whole nation which is at war when its integrity is threatened by external danger. Just as it is true that a battle is fought in the mind of the military commander, it is equally true that a war in its totality is fought in the mind of the people. I hope that this book will contribute in stimulating interest amongst our citizens in the problems of defence of our country.

The subject matter of this short book is essentially military. But it is not a book of military history. No official records have been consulted. Only what I know from personal experience has been

stated herein. The opinions expressed are purely personal. Some of the decisions to which I was exposed may have been dictated by factors and considerations of which I may not have been aware. I would like to hope that the conclusions which I have drawn in certain cases will be clarified and corrected by my peers and colleagues who had closer access to decision making at the higher levels.

183/4 Munir Road,
LAHORE
November, 1976

A. A. K. CHAUDHRY
Brig. (Retd.)

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THE INDIAN GRAB FOR KASHMIR 1947-49

Our people have the right to ask what the Pakistan army was doing when the Indian army was occupying large parts of Jammu and Kashmir and tightening its stranglehold on its poor inhabitants[1]. The answer is not far to seek. The Pakistan Army was never given the freedom of action because even after the Indian invasion of Jammu and Kashmir the British C-in-C of the Pakistan army[2] showed his unwillingness to commit regular troops in Jammu and Kashmir until he got clearance from Field Marshal Auchinleck, who was at that time Supreme Commander of the armed forces of both India and Pakistan. According to Alan Campbell Johnson, the author of "Mission with Mountbatten", F.M. Auchinleck flew to Lahore and by painting the threat of an all-out war between India and Pakistan saw to it that the Pakistan army would not be permitted to intervene in Jammu and Kashmir. As all the key command and staff appointments were at that time held by British cfficers, it was virtually impossible for the Pakistan army to act on its own initiative. All the Artillery regiments of the Pakistan army were for example, commanded by British cfficers. Apparently our

[1]The first contingent of the Indian Army was dropped in Srinagar, the capital of the State, on 27 Oct. ,1947.

[2]General Gracey, Chief of Staff, Pakistan Army was acting for the C-in-C Gen. Messervy, who was on leave (see "Mission with Mountbatten" by Alan Campbell Johnson, p. 226).

Government also held the view that an open conflict between the two newly created neighbouring states of India and Pakistan should be avoided as far as possible in the larger interest of peace in the sub-continent. They must have also thought that the issue of accession of Jammu and Kashmir would be eventually decided in Pakistan's favour since an overwhelming majority of the people of Jammu and Kashmir were Muslims and there was not the slightest doubt that when they got the opportunity to make their choice, they would opt for Pakistan.

Right upto the time of ceasefire the Indian leaders had also been reiterating that the future of the state of Jammu and Kashmir would be decided according to the wishes of its people, but with this difference, that while Pakistan showed as much restraint as was possible under the circumstances, the Indians were busy grabbing as much territory of the state as they could. Had our Government been advised correctly, and its initiative not been hindered by its dependence on British officers,[1] they might have ordered the Pakistan army to intervene in Jammu and Kashmir before the Indian army gained a foothold in the state. Had this actually happened, the story of Jammu and Kashmir would have been quite different. Afterwards when the Indian Army had built up sufficient strength and had started fanning out in all directions, the curbs imposed on the Pakistan army by its British High Command did not allow it to combat Indian aggression and prevent the Indian army from consolidating its position in that part of the state which is still under Indian occupation. At this crucial stage while the Indian army and the Indian Air Force were having a free run in the valleys and mountains of Kashmir, the Pakistan army and the Pakistan Air Force found themselves virtually in the position of onlookers.

The Struggle to Save Kashmir—The Dogra Army and the Mujahids.

The Indian sub-continent was partitioned to enable the Muslim population of India to have a homeland of their own in which they could live according to their beliefs, culture and customs which

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1There were, however, some British officers serving in the Pakistan army at that time who, regardless of the restrictions placed on their active participation in the conflict in Kashmir, made valuable contribution to our cause.

had little in common with those of the Hindus. The new state of Pakistan was created out of Muslim majority provinces and states. Although the Indian states had in theory the option to join either Pakistan or India or to continue as independent units, it was taken for granted that the states with a majority of Muslim inhabitants would join Pakistan. The Muslim rulers of the states who either wished to continue as independent units or to join Pakistan were denied this right by India who lost no time in annexing their territories by force. In doing this, India took advantage of the geographical position of these states to which Pakistan had no access and which were trapped in the surrounding land mass of Hindu majority provinces.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir was one of the largest states comprising an area of 84,471 square miles with Muslims comprising 80% of its total population. The entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir is contiguous to the provinces of Punjab and N.W.F.P.[1] which were to be merged in the new state of Pakistan. Apart from the fact that the natural routes of trade and commerce flow from this Muslim majority state into Pakistan and there are age old social and cultural ties between the two, there is also a natural affinity between the people who have freely intermingled and their bonds of kinship are rooted deeply in history. All the rivers which irrigate the fertile plains of the Punjab have their sources in Kashmir. The vast majority of the people of the state are poor, backward and down trodden because their Hindu Dogra rulers robbed them of their meagre resources by imposing numerous taxes most of which are unknown in civilised societies. They were forced to live at less than subsistence level so that they would never think of raising their voice against the tyrannical rule of the Dogra dynasty.

Partition of the sub-continent and the creation of Pakistan out of Muslim majority areas had a special significance for the oppressed Muslim inhabitants of the state of Jammu and Kashmir who formed the vast majority of its population. Having endured a life of misery, deprivation and humiliation for a long time, they saw in it the dawn of a new era which held the promise of deliverance from the tyranny of the Dogra rule. To their disappointment, however, Maharaja Hari Singh, the Hindu ruler of the state of Jammu and

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[1]North-West Frontier Province.

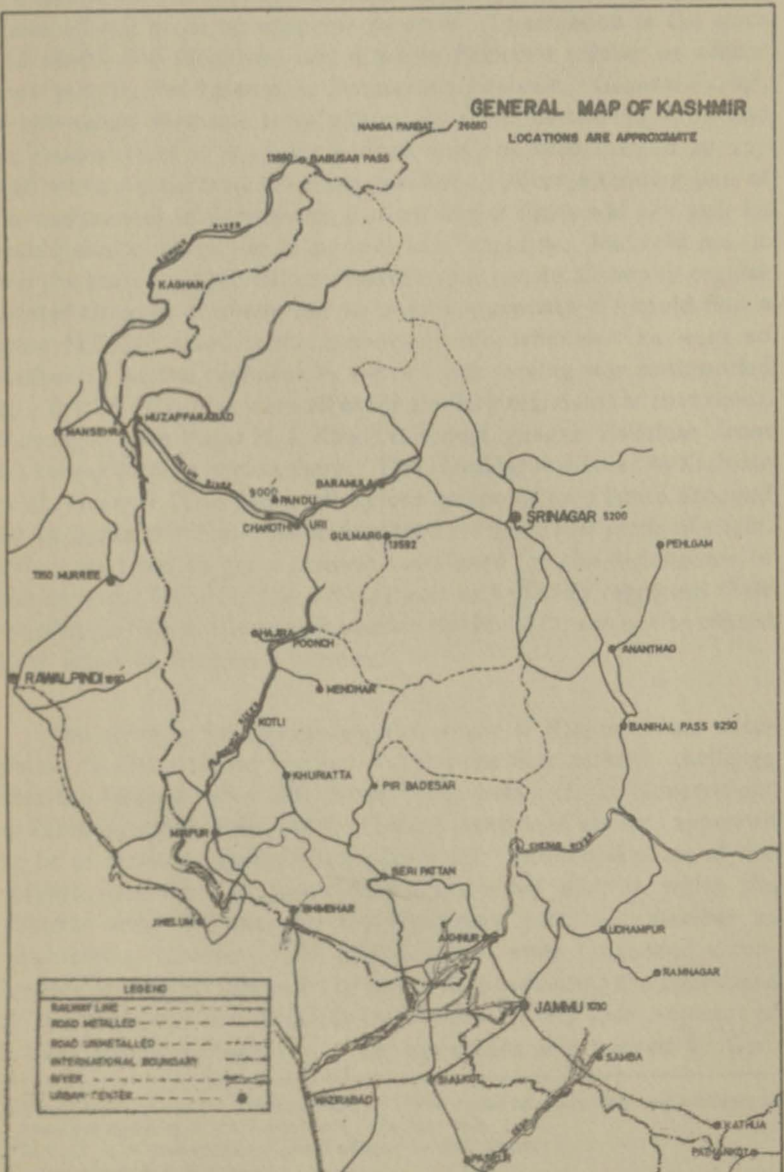
Kashmir did not come out with a clear cut declaration of his intentions about joining Pakistan which should have been the obvious course for him to adopt in view of the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in the state. He gave the impression that he wanted time to make up his mind but as it transpired he was in fact conspiring with the Hindu leaders of India to defy the wishes of his people and join India instead of Pakistan. As he delayed his decision it aroused suspicions about his intentions amongst his Muslim subjects who started agitating for an early declaration of the state's accession to Pakistan. Instead of putting their minds at rest by giving some hint that he would act according to the wishes of his people, the Maharaja let loose his Dogra troops (estimated to number at least twenty thousand) throughout the state who started a ruthless campaign to suppress the popular demand for accession to Pakistan.

When accounts of the atrocities perpetuated by the Maharaja's Dogra army on the poor and unarmed Kashmiris reached the adjoining tribal areas of the Frontier regions, the tribesmen who had age old bonds with the Kashmiri Muslims rushed in thousands to help them. A large number of Kashmiri Muslims who were serving in the Pakistan army also deserted with their arms to save their families from being slaughtered by the Dogra army. This gallant band of Kashmiri Muslim soldiers were known as the "Mujahids" (or the soldiers of Islam). Together with the tribesmens who brought their own arms and ammunition (which they manufacture in the tribal areas), these bands of Mujahids fought the Dogra army and pushed it back towards Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

Having already completed his plans and preparations to accede to India the Maharaja used the entry of the tribesmen in the state as a pretext to invite India to intervene. The Indians who were waiting for the word from the Maharaja lost no time in flying their troops into Srinagar followed by rapid re-inforcements which were eventually built up into several divisions.

Pakistan's Decision Not To Commit Regular Troops in Kashmir

There is no truth whatever in the Indian claim that they sent their troops to the state because Pakistan army was aiding the


GENERAL MAP OF KASHMIR
LOCATIONS ARE APPROXIMATE
NANGA PARBAT 26660
13690 BABUSAR PASS
KAGHAN
MUZAFFARABAD
MANSEHRA
BARAMULA
9000 PANDU
CHAKOTHI
URI
GULMARG 13592
SRINAGAR 5200
PEHLGAM
7350 MURREE
HAJIRA
POONCH
RAWALPINDI
MENDHAR
ANANTNAG
KOTLI
BANIHAL PASS 9290
KHURIATTA
PIR BADESAR
MIRPUR
BERI PATTAN
BHIMBHAR
JHELUM
AKHNUR
UDHAMPUR
RAMNAGAR
JAMMU 1030
SAMBA
SIALKOT
WAZIRABAD
KATHUA
PATHANKOT
LEGEND
RAILWAY LINE
ROAD METALLED
ROAD UNMETALLED
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
RIVER
URBAN CENTER

Mujahids. It is within my personal knowledge that upto the time the Indian army started military action in Jammu and Kashmir, with the exception of one senior Pakistan army officer who was sent there off and on as an observer to watch the situation in the state and advise the Mujahids, not a single Pakistani soldier or officer took part in the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir. General Tariq[1], as this senior Pakistani army officer was called by the Mujahids, had no headquarters in Kashmir and he was not accompanied by any staff when he entered the state territory. After attending one of his conferences in Rawalpindi, I asked him if there was any task he would like to assign me in my individual capacity. He told me it was the policy of the Pakistan Government not to allow any regular soldier to enter Kashmir but he would appreciate if I could find a good N.C.O.[2] who could accompany him whenever he went to Kashmir. As the regiment in which I was serving was commanded by a British officer (as were all other artillery regiments at that time), I arranged with Major M. J. Kiani[3] to send a gunner Havaldar from his survey battery in Nowshera. This Havaldar was killed in Kashmir while General Tariq had a miraculous escape when a bomb dropped by an Indian Air Force plane exploded within a few yards of them. When we tried to get a pension sanctioned for the dependents of the deceased Havaldar the military accounts officials regretted their inability to help in the matter because the N. C. O. was not on official duty when he became a casualty.

The struggle for preventing the whole of Kashmir from occupation by the invading Indian army was the first military challenge that the Pakistan army had to face. The policy of the Government of Pakistan, at that time, for the reasons mentioned earlier, appeared to be to avoid an open conflict with India. The initial phase of this struggle was therefore practically a one sided affair in which the Pakistan army did not play any significant part. I remember an afternoon in October, 1948, in Rawalpindi when I attended a conference of General Tariq who by now was coordinating the operations of the tribesmen and Mujahids in Kashmir. I was then Adjutant of 2 Field Artillery Regiment. The conference was opened by Gen.

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[1] Pseudonym of senior Pakistani officers who acted as observers and advisers to freedom fighters in Kashmir from time to time.
[2] N C.O. is a non-commissioned officer in the army.
[3] Later promoted Brigadier.

Tariq with a report on the latest situation on the outskirts of Srinagar. The tribesmen and Mujahids had been stopped 4 miles outside Srinagar by an Indian battalion which, after having been flown in by air, had taken positions on the perimeter of the town. There was a requirement for some armoured cars to break this ring to enable the Mujahids and tribal lashkars to continue their advance into Srinagar. Major Mohammad Masud[1] of P.A.V.O. Cavalry Regiment, who was there, sought permission to use a troop of his armoured cars to break through the thin layer of enemy infantry and open the way for Mujahids to enter Srinagar. The reaction of some of those attending the conference to this suggestion surprised me. One of the objections raised was that the tribesmen might get out of control and damage the palaces of the Maharaja. Another dissenting voice pointed out that it would indicate the presence of regular troops inside Kashmir.

While this discussion was going on Raja Ghazanfar Ali, who was at that time a Central Minister, entered the conference room accompanied by Mr. Hameed Nizami.[2] The Minister, after he had been briefed about the situation in Kashmir expressed his regret that no regular troops could be permitted to enter Kashmir. The conference adjourned on this chilly note. Since then I have often wondered how a different decision at the top at that critical moment could have changed the course of history of the sub-continent. I have also wondered what course events would have followed if a Pakistani had been appointed the C-in-C of the army as soon as Pakistan came into being and had been there to advise the Quaid on the military aspect of the situation in Kashmir at that critical juncture.

Subsequently, when the full realisation of the consequences of a complete conquest of the state of Jammu and Kashmir by India dawned on our Government, there was a slight let up in allowing the Pakistan Army to give limited support to the Mujahids who were fighting desperately to check the Indian advance aimed at complete annexation of their homeland. Even this meagre and inadequate

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[1] He was at that time Squadron Commander in 11 Cavalary Regiment (P.A.V.O.) and had the responsibility of looking after the border south of Bhimber to prevent Dogra incursion across the border.

[2] A well known Journalist who played a prominent part in the Pakistan Movement.

support frustrated India's plans and after some initial gains when they were virtually unopposed, the Indian army was not only successfully contained but driven out of tactically important ground in several sectors.

The existence of Azad Kashmir as an independent entity is a tribute to the heroic spirit of the Mujahids and the Pakistan army which assisted them in their stand against the Indian army bid to annex the whole of Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistan Air Force abstained from direct participation in the fighting, and even the basic support of artillery and armour was not available to the freedom fighters in Kashmir in the initial phase.

The tactics employed by the Indians in Kashmir were those of the sledge-hammer type. They attacked their objective first with massive air strikes followed by intense shelling before their well equipped infantry and armour closed on the objective. I observed the Indians employ these tactics in Khuiratta Sector while they were attacking a hill feature called Pir Badesar (see map opp. page 4). The defence against these well coordinated attacks invariably consisted of small bands of Mujahids, stiffened here and there with volunteers from the Pakistan army who had their homes in Kashmir. They were equipped with light weapons and carried limited quantities of ammunition. In a few major actions in which regular troops participated with some artillery support, the Indians were beaten with heavy losses.

One such memorable action was fought when well-entrenched Indian troops were driven out of the commanding feature called Pandu opposite Chakothi in Muzaffarabad Sector. I was then brigade major of the Artillery H Q. of 7 Infantry Division which was responsible for advising the Mujahid forces and controlling the limited operations which had to be undertaken by elements of the regular army due to compelling strategic considerations. It was one of the fiercest battles during the entire fighting for the control of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

At that time a number of British officers[1] were still commanding units and formations of the Pakistan army. The infantry battalion I Baluch, which was to spearhead the attack on Pandu had a British

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[1]British Officers entry in Jammu and Kashmir was banned.

C.O. who was replaced only a day before the battle by Lt. Col. Sher Bahadur who was the G.S.O.I[1] of our Division. 2 Field Artillery Regiment and a section of 8 Medium Regiment of two guns had been brought for the first time to give support to the Mujahids and elements of regular troops who were to carry out this operation. After a daring approach march at night upto the foot of Pandu Hill under the nose of the Indians on the hill top, our troops gained their initial objective at dawn. A fierce battle ensued for the capture of the main feature in which the Baluchis fought with their traditional gallantry. From the medium artillery observation post where I had taken position I heard their Commanding Officer report to the Brigade Commander, Brig. Akbar Khan, at one stage, that they were within a hundred yards of the main enemy position in Pandu village which the Commanding Officer described as a system of terraced concrete trenches. The Indians, who were well dug in, defended their position stubbornly and a bloody battle raged the whole day. To deceive the attackers, the Indians sent a message to their Brigade H.Q. at night saying that they had received re-inforcements and would counter-attack next morning. This intercepted radio message imposed caution on the attackers. Taking advantage of the temporary lull in the battle, the Indians slipped out of their defences under cover of darkness and fled to safety.

An interesting feature of this battle was the performance of the section[2] of the medium guns which were controlled by Lieut. Blaker.[3] The moment the Indian gunners took post to answer calls for defensive fire, Blaker ordered a couple of rounds of gunfire directed at their guns which sent the Indian gunners diving for cover along the banks of a dry nallah in which their guns were deployed. This counter bombardment on a miniature scale prevented the Indian gunners from giving effective support to their garrison in Pandu. I later on learnt from intelligence reports that these Indian gunners were from the same Madrasi Field Regiment with which I had come to Abbottabad from Poona.[4] It is con-

[1]General Staff Officers Grade I who was the principal staff officer in a division at that time. Later Maj. Gen.

[2]A section consisted of two medium guns of 5.5 in calibre firing 80 lbs. or 100 lbs. shells.

[3]An Anglo Pakistan Officer.

[4]It had been sent north to Abbottabad by the Indians only one week before partition. This is discused further on page 10.

ceivable that under cover of movement of units in connection with partition of the armed forces a number of non-Muslim units had been sent up North with Kashmir as their eventual destination.

The battle of Pandu reminds me of Captain Khalid Mahmud Butt who laid down his life while leading a contingent of Mujahids who had been assigned the task of assaulting this hill feature from the flank. The foot hills of Pandu which they had to first climb to assault the main feature had been named Foxes. Apparently due to insufficient reconnaissance the presence of the enemy on the Foxes had not been established and Captain Butt was under the impression that they were unoccupied. This brave young officer was the first to appear on the hill top and before any of his men could join him, he was picked up by an enemy machine gun. I observed this action through a telescope from Lieut. Blaker's Observation Post. Captain Khalid Butt was the adjutant of an elite infantry battalion, the Guides. Being a Kashmiri, he had volunteered to fight for the liberation of his ancestral homeland. He had been married only two weeks when he left his battalion to join his compatriots.

Indian Link-up with Poonch

The tight control which the British-dominated High Command in Rawalpindi exercised at critical stages of the Kashmir operations was responsible for many missed opportunities. It curbed the initiative of field commanders and was one of the many handicaps from which the liberation forces suffered. During a visit to Poonch Sector, a commander of a task force consisting mostly of Mujahids in Hajira once told me that he had surrounded Indian occupied Poonch from all sides with a number of A. K. battalions[1] and was poised to attack Poonch and eliminate the besieged garrison, but he had been refused permission to do so by the G.O.C., Maj. Gen. Loftus Tottenham.

During our conversation this officer narrated to me an incident which is worth recording. This officer was a Staff Officer in G.H.Q. India just before partition. When he learnt that the Quaid-e-Azam

[1]Azad Kashmir Battalions consisted of local ex-army soldiers and civilians.

wished to have information about the number of Muslim officers in the Indian army, he volunteered to provide this data and welcomed it as an opportunity to convince the Quaid that the Indian Army should be left intact for the joint defence of the Sub-Continent. After rehearsing his piece several times, he sought an interview with the Quaid-e-Azam which was arranged. After he had presented the required information, he attempted to deliver the speech which he had prepared but was stopped by the Quaid-e-Azam and dismissed with the remarks "Youngman, I wanted certain information which you have given me. That will be all, thank you". The Quaid had obviously no intention of entertaining such preposterous proposals. Perhaps it was in connection with this move that some army units which were to go to India found themselves in Pakistan on the eve of partition.

Just before partition we were camping in a forest near Kamaredi in Southern India where a large number of artillery units had been concentrated for reorganisation. It was here that I had first heard a rumour that there was a move to stall the division of the armed forces between Pakistan and India on one pretext or other. It was a very disturbing thought because this would have made our independence meaningless. Only a week before partition my own unit, 11 Field Artillery Regiment whose rank and file were Madrasis was despatched from Poona in Southern India to Abbottabad in Northern India which was to be part of Pakistan. It was the first Indian artillery unit to appear on the scene in Kashmir when India, in collusion with the state's Hindu ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, invaded Kashmir to pre-empt its accession to Pakistan.

After visiting Hajira Sector, I went to Gen. Tariq's[1] H.Q. and gave a detailed report on what I had learnt on the Poonch front. I explained to him that the situation there warranted urgent action. Gen. Tariq was not in favour of making any immediate move against Poonch but preferred to wait until winter when all the passes leading to Poonch would be snowbound and Poonch would be completely isolated. Subsequent events belied his hopes because before we could do anything about it, the Indians succeeded in linking up with Poonch after launching a major offensive through Mendhar Valley.This

[1]Different senior Pakistani officers performed this task from time to time.

should have been expected because ever since the Poonch air field had been under fire from a section of field guns[1] deployed in support of Mujahids, the Poonch garrison had been virtually cut off and the Indian army in Kashmir was hard pressed to do something to break the cordon. The timing of operations on both sides was a critical factor. Had we made a determined effort to reduce Poonch before the Indian link-up it had every chance of success.

The fact that no significant military move could be made without the prior approval of the senior British officers in Rawalpindi, was one of the causes of our failure to prevent the Indian army from occupying a large part of Kashmir. But for such handicaps, even with the scanty resources which were available to fight Indian aggression in Kashmir, the Indians would have found it extremely difficult to keep a substantial part of Kashmir under their occupation. The Commander of the Southern Sector, Brig. Mohammad Azam Khan, happened to visit this C.O.'s H.Q. in Hajira when I was there. Although he tried to cheer up the Sector Commander it was evident that he himself was equally frustrated. His subsequent effort against Poonch, after the Indian link-up had little chance of success because the Indians lost no time in building up their strength to meet the attack which came too late.

How meagre were the resources available to prevent the Indian army from over-running the whole of Kashmir may be illustrated from one of the many incidents which lurk in my memory. In early November, 1948, an urgent message from Lieut. Col. Ghulam Mohammad, the Battalion Commander in Khuiratta, was passed on to our Divisional Artillery Headquarter calling for anti-tank guns. The Battalion Commander had learnt that the Indians were preparing to launch an offensive with armour in Khuiratta valley which would have posed a serious threat to Kotli, a town of great strategic importance. On receiving this report the Commander Artillery, who was a British officer,[2] deputed me to rush to

[1]These two 25 pounder guns had been taken there in specially designed jeep trailers. The guns were broken down and parts carried in trailers. Roads and tracks in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir were in such poor condition that only jeeps could operate on them. The Indian Air Force could not knock out these guns inspite of their best efforts. The detachments of these guns bravely faced their daily raids. When I visited them, I found them in high spirit and they seemed to be enjoying their role. Their guns had no overhead covers.
[2]Brigadier Crawford, Royal Artillery.

Khuiratta with a section of two 6 pounder anti-tank guns. I was surprised when I received my orders and felt at a loss to understand how two six pounder anti-tank guns could stop the Indian armour from over-running their objective. We towed the guns with jeeps upto Hajira where we dismantled them and crossed the river Poonch in boats at night. We had some trouble in assembling the guns in darkness on the far bank which gave us some anxious moments since the far bank was overlooked by the Indian positions but we managed to do it just before day light. The guns were pushed by hand all the way to Kotli along the Poonch-Kotli road and then to Khuiratta where several positions in depth were prepared for these guns. Luckily the Indian armour threat did not materialise otherwise the reputation of our anti tank-gunners, who found themselves in this unenviable role, would have been at stake.

While I was returning from Khuiratta via Mirpur, I saw a Battery of I Mountain Regiment literally galloping along Mirpur-Kotli road to provide support to 7/I Punjab Battalion which had been rushed from Jhelum to Mendhar at the last minute to check the Indian advance towards Poonch. I was deeply moved to see the officers and the men of the Mountain Battery running alongwith their gun-laden mules. Major Abdul Rehman, its Battery Commander, who was leading the Battery, was a "heavy weight' gunner and if I had not seen him running with my own eyes, I would not have believed that he was capable of such a performance.

The Indian push through Mendhar to link up with Poonch in November, 1948, could not be checked successfully because the troops assigned to the task had to be brought at the last minute from their peace location in Jhelum. Had we been not so sensitive to the presence of regular troops in Kashmir and had these troops been in their prepared defensive positions before hand, the Indian advance could have been checked and valuable time could have been gained to take other measures to prevent the link-up.

Loss of Mendhar Valley and the Indian Army's link-up with Poonch was a major set back for us. It could have been prevented if the High Command in Rawalpindi had not stubbornly stuck to the policy of not allowing regular troops to remain in Kashmir. The result of this policy was that most of the time we were reacting

to Indian moves and the time and space factor was usually against us.

The Indian Air Force had unrestricted freedom of the skies in Kashmir because the Pakistan Air Force[1] was not permitted by our High Command to participate directly in operations inside Azad Kashmir territory. This was one of the most serious handicaps under which our ground forces had to operate. To protect vital bridges and installations against air raids, all that was made available was a single anti-aircraft battery. The gallant gunners of this battery, commanded by Major Peter O'Reilly,[2] successfully defended these vulnerable points from daily air attacks by rushing from one place to other. Except one hit on Domel bridge which did not cause any serious damage, not a single bridge, in Kashmir was hit by the Indian planes throughout the war, because of the protection provided to them by this small band of A.A. gunners.

As Brigade Major of Artillery 7 Division, I had frequent opportunities to visit troops in Jammu and Kashmir and wherever I went I found that, inspite of the heavy odds against them and the handicaps under which they had to operate, the morale of our troops and Mujahids was very high. It was their undaunted courage and fierce spirit of patriotism which kept the enemy at bay inspite of his manifold superiority in all conceiveable means of waging an all-out war of conquest. Their faith in the righteousness of their cause was the most powerful weapon with which the Mujahids fought aggression in Jammu and Kashmir. The basic issue was a moral one. They believed that they were fighting for a just cause and performed feats of gallantry which their adversary could seldom match.

The Aborted Pakistani Response—Operation Venus

The indecisive war in Kashmir dragged on until the end of 1948. The Indians were unable to complete their conquest of Jammu and Kashmir inspite of the heavy losses in men and material

[1] Though P.A.F. did not provide direct support in the fighting in Kashmir, it did an excellent job in transporting supplies to freedom fighters in the Northern areas. Without this support it would not have been possible to sustain the struggle for preventing the Indian army from occupying this strategically important sector.

[2] A dedicated Anglo-Pakistani officer. Later promoted Brigadier.

and we could not eject them from the areas in their occupation because of the half-hearted way in which our British dominated High Command acted. They failed to appreciate the grave situation with which our new-born state would be faced if effective measures to counteract Indian aggression in Kashmir were not taken. The argument that Pakistan could not afford to commit its armed forces in Kashmir because of the possibility of an open war with India is not convincing because due to the break up of the Indian armed forces when the sub-continent was partitioned, the Indian army was in no shape to escalate the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir into a full-scale war against Pakistan. If Indian aggression had been met with full force in the beginning, the issue of Kashmir would have been settled once for all in accordance with the wishes of the people of this predominantly Muslim State. Our bases for supporting operations in Kashmir were close to its boundaries while the Indians had to traverse long distances to reach the scene of operations. We had several lines of approach as compared with the Indians who were confined to only one long line of communication[1]. The mountainous terrain lent itself to successful fighting against a numerically superior force. The area of operations was familiar to us and the entire local population, with the exception of a small Hindu minority, were wholeheartedly with us.

Another important factor in our favour was the tremendous upsurge of spirit among the Pakistani soldiers and civilians alike and a fierce resolve to preserve our newly won independence at any cost which embraced the Muslim majority state of Jammu and Kashmir as much as any other part of Pakistan. The people of the state who had been liberated frankly expressed their disappointment at the meagre resources which the Pakistan army committed in Kashmir. The majority of the soldiers who fought against the Indian invaders were the local inhabitants. Practically every able-bodied man of these areas was engaged in the fighting directly or indirectly. It can be said with certainty that the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the areas captured by the Indians would have acted exactly in the same manner if they had a chance to fight back. It was only when the course which

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[1]This Indian approach to Jammu and Kashmir had been made possible by unjust division of Gurdaspur District adjoining Jammu and Kashmir in the Radcliff Award on Partition of the Sub-Continent.

the war followed convinced them that our objective in Kashmir was limited to preventing Indians from over-running the rest of Kashmir that, in despair, they acquiesced into their subjugation.

The reorganisation of their army after partition posed a much bigger problem to India than to Pakistan. Most of the fighting units of the combined Indian army had a mixed composition of Muslims and non-Muslims and the withdrawal of those components which came to Pakistan had left these units in India in complete disarray. In fact the Indian army could not be built into an efficient fighting machine for a long time afterwards as its poor showing in the Indo-China war of 1962 proved. It is, therefore, highly doubtful that if we had made an all-out effort in Kashmir to save it from Indian occupation, India would have attacked Pakistan across the international border. Because of the unsettled conditions prevailing in both the countries at that time, it is more probable that the fighting would have remained confined to Kashmir. In any case, the stakes in Kashmir were so high, considering the strategic, economic and political factors, that a calculated risk should have been taken. Even if it is assumed for the sake of argument that Pakistan's open participation in the conflict in Kashmir might have led to an all out war between the two countries, it is highly unlikely that India would have fared better than it did in September, 1965, considering that the relative strength of the armed forces of the two countries was as unfavourable to Pakistan in 1965 as it was in 1947-48.

After the Indian link-up with Poonch and other sizeable gains by the Indian army as a result of their autumn offensive in 1948 our Government decided to take some positive steps in Kashmir to prevent the Indian army from occupying the whole of Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian army in Kashmir had completely disregarded the assurance given by their Government to the Security Council that no offensive moves would be made by either side while the negotiations for a ceasefire were going on. In retaliation it was decided to mount a limited offensive by the Pakistan army in the Southern Sector of Jammu and Kashmir which was given the code name VENUS. The operation which was to be launched by 14 (Para) Brigade, aimed at cutting the line of communication of the Indian army in this strategically important area by destroying the bridge at Beri Pattan

and occupying the surrounding hills. It was the first operation which was planned with a well-defined objective. Inspite of bad weather more than fifty thousand rounds[1] of artillery ammunition were dumped to ensure continuous artillery support of ground troops during all phases of the operation. The operation was meticulously planned and thoroughly rehearsed by the Brigade Commander, Brig. Nawabzada Sher Ali, who was assisted by his artillery adviser, Lt-Col. Mohammad Muzaffar. Brig. Sher Ali stubbornly refused to allow any interference from visiting senior British officers. The stage was finally set for the launching of the operation on 10 December, 1948. Preparatory artillery bombardment of selected targets started and the Beri Pattan bridge was successfully engaged. Just before the main attack was to go in, G.H.Q. sent a flash signal message calling off the operation.

This sudden decision to stop the troops when they were poised to launch the attack had a stunning effect. As it transpired later, this decision was taken on receipt of a message from Ch. Zafarulla Khan, our Foreign Minister, who was attending the meeting of the Security Council which was considering the Kashmir issue at that time. Copies of the messages were sent down to lower formations and units who were to participate in the operation to assure them that the ceasefire orders had been issued because of the anticipated acceptance of the Security Council's resolution by the Pakistan Government. It would not be wrong to assume that the Indians, having learnt about the projected operation and fearing that this would be a crippling blow to their entire war effort in Kashmir, had thwarted it by hastening the Security Council's resolution to bring about an immediate ceasefire ostensibly as a prelude to permanent settlement of the Kashmir issue, but in reality having no intention of honouring it.

Had this operation gone through, the Indian army in Kashmir would have found itself in a serious situation. Successful execution of this operation would have opened the way to numerous other possibilities of dealing equally severe blows to the enemy in other sectors for which plans had been made and troops had been positioned. Its sheer psychological effect would

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[1]Complete Shell.

have been tremendous. It is possible that had the C-in-C of the Pakistan army been a Pakistani at that time, he would have succeeded in persuading our Government to let the attack go in. The negotiations in New York could have gone on a little longer. There was every chance of the operation succeeding and its objectives being captured. Had there been no last minute interference with this operation, the overall tactical situation in Jammu and Kashmir would have changed so materially that the Indians would have been willing to honour the agreement which was reached between the two countries in the Security Council.

2

RE-ORGANISATION OF THE ARMY

Organisational Changes and New Concepts

Soon after the ceasefire in January, 1949, India adopted an aggressive posture towards us and tried to keep up the pressure from time to time by concentrating her troops at sensitive points on our borders. Even upto the early sixties, Indian raids across the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir were an every-day occurrence which made life virtually unbearable for the people of Azad Kashmir[1] who inhabited these areas. The ceasefire line having been based on the line of actual control had not taken into account the fact that local inhabitants had their fields and homes astride this line. However, there was a tacit agreement that they would be allowed to till their fields as before and there would be no interference with their daily life. These poor people were the main target of the Indian Army in Kashmir. They were not only constantly harassed, their cattle were lifted, their houses were burnt and their women folk were molested.

The harassing tactics of the Indians in Kashmir and their provocative posture along our borders made it imperative for the Pakistan army to ensure its battle worthiness to meet this challenge. Thus

[1]Azad means free. See the map of Jammu and Kashmir and the ceasefire line which divides the territory of Free Kashmir from the Indian occupied territory.

in 1951, when the Indian army concentrated its troops on our borders the First Corps H.Q. was hurriedly raised in Jhelum which set in motion the process of reconnaissance all along the borders and detailed operational planning at all levels. Establishment of the First Corps H.Q. created considerable interest. Uptil then command in the field was exercised at divisional level and the co-ordination was left to G.H.Q. Training of the Corps staff and Corps units, operational planning and welding of the formations into well knit fighting teams was a challenging task which was achieved in a very short time. During that year a number of corps exercises with and without troops were held which included large scale artillery demonstrations. Brig. Altaf Qadir who was the first Chief of Staff of the Corps was largely responsible for gearing up the Corps H.Q. to perform its role effectively in peace and war. Towards the end of 1951, this training programme culminated in a major exercise with troops in Sheikhupura area. This was the biggest exercise with troops held so far. The Corps H.Q. was assisted by the Training Advisory Staff of the C-in-C in running this exercise. The T.A.S. as this team of advisors was called consisted of a few British officers headed by a Major General. These were the last British officers to serve in Pakistan army; they made valuable contribution not only in the training of the Corps H.Q. but also in the training of the army at the higher level.

In 1950, a senior officers course was run at Staff College, Quetta which was attended by a large number of the senior officers of the army. The course was conducted by the T.A.S. with Major General Gareeves (G.O.C. 6 Bahawalpur Division) as its Director. This course appeared to have been designed to evaluate the relative merit of our senior officers to choose the most outstanding amongst them as the first Pakistani C-in-C of the Army and earmark others for senior appointments. At the end of the year Gen. Mohammad Ayub was appointed C-in-C. Shortly after Gen. Ayub's appointment as C-in-C practically all the Sandhurst trained officers who were senior to him left the army[1]. After partition, Gen. Ayub had gone to East Pakistan and had remained there upto the time of

[1]The remaining Sandhurst officers left the army when General Musa who was junior to them was appointed C-in-C. Pakistan army had only a few Sandhurst trained officers and could ill afford to forego the benefit of the services of its senior-most officers. Maj. Gen. Hayauddin who struck me as one of the most outstanding amongst them was unfortunately killed in an air crash.

ceasefire in Kashmir. He was, therefore, not so well known in the army at that time as other senior officers most of whom had been associated directly or indirectly with the struggle for the liberation of Jammu and Kashmir.

As soon as he took over command of the Pakistan army, Gen. Ayub took in hand intensive training of the army at all levels. He was equally prompt in tackling the problems of reorganisation and re-equipping the army. It was under his leadership that the Pakistan army matured into one of the best trained armies. His insistence on adopting tactics and techniques to suit our conditions based on a realistic appraisal of our capabilities and limitations provided the basis for the formulation of a sound tactical doctrine for the army. He had clear cut ideas about the lines on which the army had to be reorganised and trained. He understood his soldiers and knew how to get the best out of them by making use of their native skills. On one occasion at the end of a presentation on a new concept of defence, I heard him saying "Wrap yourself around the attackers". I often repeated these words to myself which I thought aptly described the spirit behind the successful conduct of defence.

The Martial Law of 1958, although of far-reaching importance for the country, did not have any significant impact on the army in general. The process of intensive training and reorganisation of the army got into stride again before the year was out. In fact, some of the most important changes in its organisation and tactical concepts took place in the years following Martial Law. The reorganisation and streamlining of the army at various tiers to make it lighter, more mobile and hardhitting took practical shape in the years preceding the 1965 War with India. During these crucial years, Gen. Ayub continued to associate himself actively with the affairs of the army and it was under his direction that all the major changes in the doctrine and the organisation of the army took place.

During my tenure of duty as Director of Weapons and Equipment in G.H.Q. from 1959 to 1961, I occasionally came across strongly worded notes by him on important issues. I was impressed by his acute awareness of deficiencies of arms and equipment in the army especially in armour and his plans to offset those

disadvantages. The decisions he gave on these vital issues were bold and imaginative.

I particularly remember the way he handled an important issue with the United States Military Advisors Group. The U.S.M.A.G. were insistent that the Pakistan army's capabilities should be limited to a defensive role. They seemed to overlook the basic fact that there is no such thing as a purely defensive war. Even a basically defensive strategy is meaningless unless it is a sound combination of defensive and offensive actions. To force their decision on us, the U.S.M.A.G. made the supply of Patton tanks to Pakistan army conditional upon the scrapping of old Sherman tanks with which our armoured formations were equipped. This would have further widened the gap between the relative strengths in armour between us and the Indian army. Gen. Ayub stubbornly refused to be dictated by the U.S.M.A.G. on this important issue. He ordered a crash programme to recondition and modernise the fleet of Sherman Tanks, a step which paid off in the 1965 War. He made it a point to attend all major exercises, especially those in which new ideas and concepts were tested. His summing up at the end of these exercises was incisive and revealed his deep understanding of the problems of defence of Pakistan.

New Concepts in Defence

The Indian war of aggression in Kashmir apart from its other far reaching consequences had a special significance for the armed forces of Pakistan. It did not leave the slightest doubt in our mind that if we were to survive as an independent nation, the armed forces of Pakistan had to be fully prepared to defend our borders without any warning against an enemy who was not only numerically superior but also enjoyed other advantages such as a strong industrial base which were not available to Pakistan to the same extent. It was appreciated that if we could not match our material resources against our potential enemy, we must counter-balance it in other ways. The obvious answer was for the Pakistan army to attain the highest possible standard of combat efficiency, to evolve techniques and tactics which would relegate numbers to a secondary position, and above all to make our soldiers aware of the vital importance of their role in the preservation of Pakistan.

Indian aggression in Kashmir made it clear that the Pakistan army had to be vigilant all the time and keep itself in full operational readiness to take to the field at any moment. From that point onwards every unit and formation of Pakistan army went through a most intensive training programme. Special attention was paid to develop initiative and resourcefulness in every combatant. New ideas were encouraged and new concepts were developed with an eye on the capabilities of the potential enemy and keeping in mind our own limitation of resources. Highest possible standards of physical fitness and individual combat efficiency were laid down. Special attention was paid to training at night because it was accepted that Pakistan Air Force will be fully occupied with counter air operations against numerically superior Indian Air Force which will oblige our ground troops to restrict their movement to hours of darkness. The target set for night training was that all arms should be able to operate during the night with the same efficiency as during the day.

To evolve new tactics, formations were assigned the tasks of testing new ideas on ground. Mobility, fire power and crossing of water obstacles figured prominently in the search for the maximum utilization of available resources. New concepts of fighting defensive battles on wide frontages were tried to economise in manpower. Covering ground with fire within the maximum effective range of weapons instead of holding it with bodies became the slogan. Fire power of the Infantry was boosted up with the same object by giving two light machine guns instead of one to an Infantry section[1].

The central idea of the new concept was to use minimum troops for holding ground so that maximum effort could be used for counter attack. There was a lively controversy over this concept of defence throughout the army. The thinking of the Pakistan army was no longer static. All ranks were imbued with a new spirit, a spirit of enterprise and self-reliance which spurned the material advantage which a potential foe might enjoy.

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[1]There are four rifle companies in an infantry battalion each consisting of three platoons and in each platoon there are three sections. A section consists of 10 men with a Naik/Havaldar as their section Commander.

Alongwith modification in tactics and techniques, large scale organisational changes were made at all levels keeping in view the role of different arms of services and the terrain on which they would have to operate. The old organisations which were a legacy from the British Indian army were subjected to a close scrutiny with a view to adapt them to our own conditions. An important part of this pruning process was cutting down of the administrative tail which had made the units and formations unwieldly and acted as a brake on their mobility. Formations and units spent the best part of the year on training in the field on these lines which was made as realistic as it could be in peacetime. Casualties during exercises with firing were accepted.

While the entire time from the ceasefire in Kashmir onwards was devoted to reshaping of our army, we discovered in our encounter with the Indians in the 1965 War that the Indian army had changed very little. Its tactics and technique were exactly the same as were laid down in the old pamphlets and manuals of the pre-partition days. This was rather surprising because after their debacle in the Indo-Chinese War of 1962, we expected that the Indians would have done some fresh thinking.

In the years before the 1965 War, a lively controversy over the 'new concept' raged throughout our army which generated a great deal of heat.

While the protagonist of this concept advocated wide frontages in defence which meant thinning down of bodies on the ground and relying on the well-coordinated fire power of integral weapons of infantry, the 'die-hards' shook their heads in disapproval because they apprehended that such wide dispersion would not withstand a determined enemy attack. The latter school felt that human resistance on ground was a formidable factor and by dispersing sub-units over thousands of yards we were under-rating this factor.[1] They contended that the integrity of defence would be further

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1I remember Brig. Gul Mowaz M.C. making a remark to this effect during an exercise in which the Trial Brigade which he commanded was assigned the task of testing the new concept on ground. 26 Field Regiment which I commanded at that time had been placed under him for this task.

jeopardised by a sense of isolation amongst these sub-units. The chief idea behind economy in troops while deploying them for the defensive battle was to keep back maximum strength for the counter attack but this in itself was dependent on the troops in the line holding out until a suitable opportunity was created for launching the counter stroke. The new concept was in fact the concept of a bold and vigorous offensive-defence. By deploying one-third of the force on the ground and keeping back two-third for the offensive action, as opposed to the traditional two-third on ground and one-third in reserve for counterattack, the protagonists of the new concept were introducing a radical change in battlecraft. As far as offensive operations were concerned, special emphasis was laid on manoeuvre over difficult ground, wide cutflanking moves, negotiating water obstacles during night and approaching from the least expected direction to achieve surprise.

Another departure from the classical pattern which was suggested was the employment of artillery in defensive and offensive operations. To economise in ammunition, minimum artillery support in the form of concentrations on call during attack was advocated. The accent was on making infantry self-reliant as far as possible. Some enthusiasts went as far as to advocate reduction of divisional artillery to only a few field batteries[1]. The playing down of the role of artillery did not fit into a concept which relied for its effectiveness on fire, and therefore did not find favour with the gunners. They argued that while the actions of supporting arms revolve around infantry in the defensive battle, the latter play a key role in enabling infantry to hold ground and recapture it if lost by enemy action. Infantry's own integral weapons can be neutralised by enemy artillery before the enemy closes with the defence and while those which escape enemy artillery fire may inflict casualties on the attacking troops, they are unlikely to stop a determined and well led attacking force.

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[1]One proposal was to have five combat groups in an infantry division with only one field battery of six guns to support each battle group. This would have reduced the number of artillery pieces in an infantry division to 30 field guns as compared with 54 field guns, 18 medium guns and 18×120 mm mortars which comprised the divisional artillery in the existing establishment at that time,

Similarly in attack, our gunners maintained that until our artillery neutralises the enemy artillery which will engage the attacking troops when they come in the open and also silence the automatic weapons deployed in the defensive position when the attacking force is about to close on it, there is very little chance of an attack succeeding. Guaranteed fire support in the shape of a timed programme was therefore from their point of view an indispensable ingredient of the fire and movement plan on which the plan of attack is based. To cut it down to mere concentrations of fire on call to save ammunition did not appear to be a sound application of the principle of economy of force and was viewed by them with grave misgivings.

Petty inter-arm jealousies have an awkward habit of raising their head in peace time and clouding important doctrinal issues. It is particularly regrettable at higher levels where officers are supposed to cease to belong to any particular unit or arm and are expected to display a broader outlook in all professional matters. They seem to forget one of the elementary lessons which is dinned into their ears throughout their training that any combat force capable of effective action in battle is an all arms team. The tactical situation with which it is confronted on the battlefield will dictate which arm will play a major or even a decisive role in a particular action. It is not difficult to visualise situations in which infantry may by surprise capture an important objective with its own integral weapons. In another situation infantry may have to contend with an overwhelmingly superior enemy force when the correct application of artillery fire may not only restore the balance but make all the difference between success and failure. There can be tactical situations which may present opportunities for armour to capture large chunks of territory practically unaided by other arms by exploiting its own mobility.

A successful commander fights his battles keeping in mind the characteristics, capabilities and limitations of the various fighting arms which are made available to him for the task. A judicious allocation of resources to various tasks by striking a correct balance between principles of concentration and economy has always been the hallmark of sound planning. Even a Commander of the stature of Field Marshal Montgomery who won

his laurels in the battle of Al-Alamien has been criticised for not weighting his main attack in the North sufficiently with artillery in that battle, which according to his critics, prolonged the 'Break-in' phase which enabled the bulk of Rommel's forces to escape and robbed Montgomery of the opportunity of delivering a decisive blow which could have shortened the war in the desert.

The new tactical concept was adopted by the army as its official doctrine in the late fifties. Because of its radical departure from the traditional pattern, especially in the conduct of the defensive battle, certain amount of doubt still lurked in the minds of those who had opposed it from its very inception. After the September War in 1965 its critics maintained that the new tactical concept had not stood the test of war and commanders in some sectors had to discard it and resort to the old pattern. This was perhaps not a fair criticism because there is no text-book solution of any tactical problem with which a commander may have to contend on the battlefield. If some field commanders in the 1965 War adopted a more compact defence than was visualised in the new concept, it was either because they had not accepted it mentally and sought security in numbers, or the ground and the anticipated strength and mode of the enemy attack dictated a different pattern of deployment.

3

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

At the time of partition, the Pakistan army did not receive its due share of military hardware, the bulk of which was held in ordnance depots located on the other side. Likewise all ordnance factories except one small clothing factory in Sialkot were located in India. During World War II, these ordnance depots had been heavily stocked and the production capacity of the ordnance factories had been vastly enhanced by the British so that India could serve as a supply base for operations in South and South East Asia. All this fell into the hands of India while Pakistan was left with what was held in unit stores and the two ordnance depots which happened to be located in Pakistan.

The U.S. Military Aid did much to fill the gap but even that fell far short of our minimum requirements. To start with, their estimate of the size of the force required to meet our bare minimum requirements of a viable defence was hopelessly unrealistic and inadequate. According to them a hard core of three and a half divisions was all that Pakistan needed to defend thousands of miles of her borders. It was only this small force which United States was prepared to support under its much publicised Military Aid Programme for Pakistan. On top of it their refusal to help us to build any war reserves whatsoever put us in a very unenviable situation. Their approach to the problem appeared to be from a different angle altogether, and they did not,

in any case, take into account the situation with which Pakistan might be confronted in case of Indian aggression against her. Their interest in us appeared to be limited to utilising Pakistan's geographical position in containing the Soviet Union in the pursuit of a larger global strategy.

I could not help coming to this conclusion while I performed the duties of Director of Weapons and Equipments in General Headquarters from 1959 to 1961. We repeatedly drew attention of the United States Military Aid Group to the acute shortages in our war reserves of weapons and ammunition supplied by them but we could not persuade them to see our point of view.

The only ordnance factory which Pakistan had been able to establish in Wah had limited capabilities. It had been initially set up to manufacture small arms and their ammunition. As a result of untiring efforts of its management and workers, the factory was gradually geared up to produce ammunition for our field guns which was a big step forward and went a long way in providing us with certain measure of self sufficiency in this key item. In contrast it is worth remembering that some of the ordnance factories which went to India had the capability even then of not only producing ammunition for artillery but also manufacturing guns.

Our inability to produce several essential items of equipment and ammunition in our own factory had created a situation which was not only frustrating but alarming. In our efforts to persuade the Government to agree to the expansion of our only ordnance factory, one serious obstacle with which we were confronted time and again was the attitude of our Ministry of Finance. I had heard President F.M. Ayub say in one of his addresses to the G.H.Q. officers that if he said 'yes' to a proposal which had financial implications and Mr. Shoiab, the Finance Minister, said 'no', it was 'no'. But this did not prevent us from exerting maximum pressure on the Government to pay serious attention to the shortages in our reserves and enhance the capabilities of the ordnance factory to produce much needed items of ammunition in which shortages were critical. Mr. Shoiab was known to have strong views about the expenditure incurred on the ordnance factory. I was told that instead of increase in this expenditure he wanted the ordnance factory to manufacture items

for the civil market to make it partially self-supporting. I do not know how far this was true but it did not deter me from putting up a strongly worded note in which I ventured to point out that as against scores of ordnance factories in India, we had only one ordnance factory and it was a pity that even in that factory we were thinking of producing pots and pans instead of gearing it up to make up the shortages in our reserves. I remember having pointed out in the same context that it was in our knowledge that in contrast to us India was engaged in developing the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

One of the weapons of which there was shortage in the army at that time was the sten gun. We were not manufacturing it in our ordnance factory and its source of supply had dried up. We had been importing sten guns from Britain and when the British army discarded it they stopped its production. The problem seemed to be insoluble until I discovered that we had entered into an agreement with an entrepreneur in Europe to dispose of a sizeable number of rifles of foreign make which could be spared because these rifles were different from our standard 303 calibre rifle. A large shipment of these rifles had somehow found its way into Pakistan at the time of partition. I was told informally by one old hand in our Directorate that these rifles had been ordered by the ruler of an Indian Muslim State but the state had ceased to exist while the ship carrying the rifles was still on high seas. In the confusion that followed, the ship unloaded the rifles in one of our sea ports. According to the agreement for the disposal of these rifles, we were to barter them away for an equal number of 303 rifles. Since there was no requirement of 303 rifles which were being manufactured in our own ordnance factory, I thought that by some arm twisting, we may succeed in forcing Mr. Beartnes, the foreign arms dealer, who had made this deal to give us an equivalent number of sten guns instead of rifles.

When I put up this proposal I was summoned to the Ministry of Defence and told that it was too late for it because the agreement had been already finalised and the Government was committed to implement it. I explained that we had no requirement for 303 rifles and that the party concerned will produce the sten guns if we exert some pressure because I had a hunch that entrepreneurs who traded in arms have a way of coming up with what may be seemingly impossible. Since we had not delivered the rifles which were

apparently highly prized by this customer, I knew that we could not be hustled into parting with them in a hurry and I let the matter rest at that. Hardly a few days had passed when Mr. Beartnes, who was after our rifles appeared in my office. He had flown in immediately from Europe when he learnt that there was some hitch about the deal. Besides reminding me of our obligations under the agreement he tried to impress me with his connections in the highest quarters. I told him plainly that if he wanted the rifles he will have to produce the sten guns and gave him the number of sten guns which we will accept for the rifles. I was pleasantly surprised to learn from him that he had already started a search for sten guns but according to him the chances of finding them were slim. When he was convinced that there was no other alternative left to him, he flew to England and wired back that he had arranged sufficient number of sten guns to exchange with the rifles.

To boost up the fire power which infantry could develop with its own integral weapons, there was a need for replacing the outmoded 303 rifle. Most of the armies including the Indians had discarded the single shot rifle and changed over to automatic and semi-automatic rifles. Once the decision to replace the 303 had been taken, we had to look for a suitable replacement. Apart from logistics involved in adoption of an automatic or semi-automatic rifle with the increased expenditure of ammunition, the accuracy, weight, ease of handling, its robustness and host of other factors had to be considered while choosing the new rifle which is the highest population weapon in the army. We were also interested at that time in acquiring wire guided anti-tank missiles which were being adopted by many armies including the Indian army.

I was deputed in 1960 to go abroad and study the latest developments in the field of small arms and anti-tank guided weapons. After seeing the new American rifle and the machine gun, I visited a number of countries including France, Switzerland, West Germany and England. Except the U.S.A. and Germany, most of the other countries had gone for various versions of the NATO 762 calibre F.N. rifle. After seeing these rifles and holding prolonged discussions with the users, I considered that the G3 rifle developed by W. Germany was the one which had been perfected to the full satisfaction of the German army while the others appeared to be still

contemplating further improvements in the design of their rifles. Taking all other factors into consideration the G3 'rifle came nearest to meeting our requirement and I accordingly recommended it to our general staff who accepted my recommendation.

As for the anti-tank guided missile, I preferred the German Cobra mainly for its small size, light weight, simple design and ease in handling as compared with its rivals. I reported to the general staff that anti-tank guided weapon were still in the development stage and there were numerous possibilities of its employment in other than its present role and we should therefore wait before we make up our mind about adopting any of its present versions.

4

ARTILLERY

In the 1965 War, our artillery performed remarkably well on all fronts. This was acknowledged by the Indians whose offensive plans were frustrated by the devastating fire of our guns even where the Indians had succeeded in building up numerical superiority of four to one. We were a highly trained arm of service in which a healthy competition between units and between formations had produced a spirit of pride in our guns which we believed could turn the scales in battle if used with skill and imagination. By streamlining our procedures and developing new techniques we had enhanced our standard of accuracy and speed in firing. We achieved this by effecting basic changes in our organisations and methods which we had inherited from the British. Reorganisation of our artillery in the early fifties, when we changed over from two troops of four guns each in a battery to a single fire unit of six guns, had considerably speeded up the response from our guns by eliminating two intermediate troop command posts.[1]

Most of our senior gunners had served in mountain artillery and like all mountain gunners were perfectionists. By hardwork, unbounded zeal and enthusiasm and above all their devotion to the guns and the men who served them, they instilled in our young officers a sense of pride in their arm of service. The great tradi-

[1]Where technical data for the guns is worked out and from where the fire orders are passed to the guns.

tions left behind by the Muslim gunners of the sub-continent also evoked considerable interest and gave us a sense of continuity. I remember having written an article in the Artillery Journal on the employment of artillery by the Mughal Emperor Babar who inflicted a crushing defeat on Ibrahim Lodhi in 1526 in the First Battle of Panipat in which Babar's artillery played a decisive part. He was the first warrior to use guns in battle in this sub-continent and he used them with such telling effect that when his guns opened up, they changed the course of the battle and what looked like near defeat was turned into a resounding victory. Babar's army was outnumbered by his adversary by ten to one. The excellence of Muslim gunners was so firmly established that even Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab had in his service a Muslim gunner to command his guns.

Artillery is an arm of service whose standard of technical efficiency can be easily assessed. The speed with which the gunners respond to the orders for engaging targets and how close they land their shells to the targets is a simple test of how good or bad the gunners are. They have to strive ceaselessly throughout their service to attain the highest standard of technical efficiency which alone can measure upto these twin requirements of speed and accuracy. In their preoccupation with training, they are sometime apt to overlook the fact that the mechanical efficiency of their equipment is as important as their technical skill.

I learnt this lesson in one of our exercises with troops with live firing in 1956. 4 Field Regiment, which I was commanding, was engaged in firing divisional artillery concentrations in close support of infantry in attack. Suddenly a shell landed right in the middle of the leading echelons of attacking troops and four or five soldiers were hit. Before the orders to stop firing could reach the guns, a second shell landed at the same spot causing more casualties. The lane in which these short rounds fell had been allotted to our regiment and it appeared that the offending gun belonged to us.

As soon as the exercise was over, I went to the gun position and checked every step involved in the engagement of the particular serial in the fire plan during which the unfortunate

incident had occurred. As a result of detailed investigations, I was satisfied that none of my guns had been guilty of this erratic behaviour. I then saw Brig. Abbas Beg, Commander Divisional Artillery, and asked him to personally inquire into the incident and fix responsibility. After minute examination of all the evidence especially the shape of the craters made by the shells which had done the damage, it was established that it was the gun of another unit which had fired those two shells and due to a mechanical defect in one of their guns its shells had landed in our lane. I never forgot this incident and always attached as much importance to the mechanical soundness of every gun as I did to the training of the gunners who had to operate them.

One of the primary tasks of Corps artillery which I commanded during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War was to attack and silence enemy guns. A very high standard of accuracy in firing is a pre-requisite for successful execution of this mission. During our training before the war we made every possible effort to reduce to minimum the margin of human error and correct any imperfection in the behaviour of any of our guns. We spent long hours on the ranges studying the individual performance of our guns. After firing every gun of the Corps artillery on a target individually and then by batteries and regiments, we used to get the massed fire of whole of Corps artillery on targets close to our observation post. Our favourite target was a low ridge only a thousand yards away from us. As this involved violation of safety rules for practice firing with heavy guns, the safety officers objections had to be overruled by accepting the responsibility for any untoward consequences of violating the laid down safety distances. Our gunners at all levels had attained such a high standard of professional excellence that I was confident that there would be no 'swingers'. It was an excellent opportunity for me to study the effect at the target end of the concentrated fire of a large number of guns of mixed calibres. By close observation of its devastating effect, I was convinced that if this fire is delivered accurately and rapidly, no opposition can withstand it. Consequently it was with the full knowledge of the capabilities of the weapons with which we were equipped and the confidence which our training had given us in our ability to get the best possible results from them that we went to war in August/September, 1965.

By the middle of 1965 the incursions across the ceasefire line by the Indian army of occupation in Kashmir had assumed a menacing proportion. At about the same time India moved its armoured division from Jhansi to Jullundur near Pakistan's border which was intended to be a warning to Pakistan that India would not stop short of an all out war if it could not settle its score with Pakistan in Kashmir. Consequently, Pakistan army was alerted and a state of emergency was declared to meet any situation which might arise from these hostile Indian moves. In the absence of any reserves, army formations in the interior were moved to concentration areas nearer to the borders with India.

When our formation received orders to move out of its peace location in Campbellpur I was surprised to learn that our headquarters was to assume the role of a traffic control centre and our units were to be allotted to various formations. I went to General Headquarter and met Brigadier Gul Hassan who was Director of Military Operations. He confirmed the orders we had already received and informed me that since 4 Corps Artillery was dispersing I was to take over the command of an independent infantry brigade in Narowal. I argued with him that our Corps artillery should not be employed in penny packets. I suggested to him that if instead of distributing our units to formations, the Corps artillery was used as a G.H.Q. reserve of fire power, it would enable G.H.Q. to influence the course of battle in anysector which needed reinforcing. Brigadier Gul Hassan saw my point and agreed with me and ordered us to concentrate between Wazirabad and Sialkot. This decision to keep our Corps artillery intact was amply justified in the September, 1965 War.

4 Corps Artillery which I commanded in September, 1965 war had the honour of taking part in four battles—Chhamb, Jaurian, Sialkot and Chawinda. We had the rare opportunity of participating in every type of operation of war. The offensive battle for the capture of Chhamb was described by Major General Akhtar Malik in his report to G.H.Q. as mainly an artillery battle. When Jaurian fell, Maj. Gen. Yahya paid a memorable tribute to the gunners when he said to me "Let Jaurian be a feather in your cap". The pursuit of the defeated enemy from Chhamb onwards would have yielded equally impressive results and Indian withdrawal could have been

turned into a rout if time had not been lost in making an unexpected change in command at the top during the operation and curtailing its scope with which I have dealt later on in this book. In Sialkot Sector we effectively covered the withdrawl of 24 Bde to Chawinda and played a crucial role in supporting 6 Armoured Division in the historic battle of Chawinda.

The composition of 4 Corps artillery varied from battle to battle. Corps artillery's primary task is counter-bombardment, long range harassing and interdiction fire, and reinforcing divisional artillery when Corps artillery is not engaged on its own primary tasks. In the battles of Chhamb, Jaurian, Sialkot and Chawinda in which we participated we had to perform the dual task of providing direct support to our troops which is the task of divisional artillery and not Corps artillery, as well as all the tasks of Corps artillery. In these battles we had two to four field artillery regiments in addition to heavy and medium guns along with corps locating and anti-aircraft regiments.

The tactics which we employed were designed to meet the requirement of each battle. In Chhamb where we had only one Indian field artillery regiment and one medium regiment opposite us, we used our heavy and medium guns to knock them out before H-Hr[1] and exploited to the utmost the combined fires of all calibres to reduce the strong fortifications in which the Indians were entrenched. To achieve maximum effect at the target end we used our heavies and mediums along with field guns on enemy position in a 90 minute Pre H-Hr bombardment on these strong points so that our firing might not be inhibited by safety distances between our own troops and the enemy positions.

In Jaurian, which was an interlude in the pursuit operation in which speed was the essence of the whole operation, the enemy was blasted out of his position by concentrating the fire of every gun on pin point targets covering the entire length and depth of enemy positions which he had hurriedly occupied. During the withdrawal before the battle of Chawinda our long range heavy and medium guns slowed down the enemy advance and enabled 24 Brigade to

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[1]The exact time at which the attacking troops break cover and move forward.

prepare a strong defensive position around Chawinda. In the battle of Chawinda itself in which we had to contend with a numerically vastly superior force, the chief consideration was that every engagement should inflict maximum material damage. In this battle an equally important consideration was to attack the mind of the enemy in order to break his will to continue with the attack. We also succeeded in preventing the enemy artillery from providing effective support to their armour and infantry during these battles.

While writing about the so-called teeth arms in battle, one is apt to overlook the contribution of other arms and services. Our Corps Artillery was able to perform its role successfully in various battles because of the excellent communications provided by our Signal Company and the support of our administrative units which were integral part of the Corps Artillery.

Communications are vital for any arm of service but artillery units and formations just cannot function without a foolproof communication system. The demands we made on our signal company were heavy and exacting but we were never disappointed. We had not only duplicate line communications with our units but also three different wireless nets with the result that we were never out of touch with them. On more than one occasion the formation we were supporting asked us to pass messages for them on our telephone line when their own line communications had broken down. If on any occasion our cable was damaged by enemy shelling or bombing, Major Khattack, our Signal Company Commander, would jump into his jeep and dash forward to repair it and our communications were restored in no time.

There was shortage of telephone cable in our Army at that time and when we went into action in Chhamb Sector on 15th August for the first time we did not have enough cable to duplicate our telephone for communications. When I received a message of appreciation from Major Gen. Malik Sher Bahadur, the Chief of General Staff, for our performance, I asked for some cable as a token of this appreciation and it was promptly sent to us.

Our transport company which had the responsibility for ammunition supply ensured that our guns were never silent because

of interruption in ammunition supply. Right upto the ceasefire every gun in our Corps artillery had its full quota of reserve ammunition close at hand. This ammunition had to be brought to the battlefield from distant depots in vehicles whose movement was restricted to hours of darkness. This imposed a tremendous strain on the drivers but inspite of it they were always one step ahead of us. For every shell we fired there was one in reserve within easy reach of our guns and another on its way from the ammunition depots in the rear.

We were equally proud of our electrical and mechanical engineers. They kept the wheels of our vehicles turning and we had never to leave behind a vehicle or a gun when we changed our locations. When our guns moved from Padhar to Chhamb and from Chhamb to Jaurian, they had to go over some really bad patches but there were no stragglers and the worn out tractors of our medium and heavy guns which had been declared beyond repair in our peace location[1] always made it to the next gun position on time. I remember one occasion when the guns had to be rushed back from Narowal to Pasrur when the Indians launched their offensive in Sialkot Sector on the morning of 8 September. I saw a heavy 155 mm gun on the side of the road which had been left behind because its tractor had developed a defect. I found out the battery to which this gun belonged and caught up with its battery commander who was looking for our E.M.E. detachment.[2] I told him to go back and bring the gun back personally and report to me. The gun had reached the concentration area by the time I wound up in my headquarter.

[1] Incidently, because of the state of these tractors our Corps Artillery had been labelled as unfit for war.
[2] Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

5

KASHMIR 1965 — THE FIRST PHASE

Involvement in Kashmir

Ever since the ceasefire agreement in Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan, the unsettled issue of the accession of this former State of undivided India has been a potential threat to peace in this region. India's negative attitude and flagrant disregard of United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir has so far thwarted all attempts to settle this dispute by peaceful means[1]. Instead of reaching an amicable settlement with Pakistan, India has all along tried to pressurise Pakistan into giving up its demand for a just and fair settlement of the Kashmir issue. In adopting this posture India has relied on its greater material resources and numerical strength of its armed forces. They appear to have failed to appreciate that no country gives up its just stand over an issue of fundamental importance like this merely for the reason that it has fewer divisions or squadrons of air force.

When Major General Akhtar Malik took over command of 12 Div, which had the operational responsibility for Jammu and Kashmir he appreciated that the only way to put an end to the constant harassment of the locals by the Indian occupation forces along the ceasefire line was to hit back and leave the Indians in no doubt that

[1]Pakistan's repeated efforts to raise this issue before the Security Council and exhort United Nations to enforce its resolutions on Kashmir had been so far frustrated by the Soviet Union's veto.

henceforth force will be met with force. The possibility of Indian Army's harassing tactics along the ceasefire line being a prelude to Indian military action to press their claim to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir could not be ruled out in view of provocative statements to this effect which were being made by Indian political leaders at that time. To discourage Indians from embarking upon a fresh adventure in Kashmir and to demonstrate that he was fully prepared to meet such an eventuality, Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik decided to send a few patrols deep into Indian held Kashmir as a retaliation to frequent violation of ceasefire line by Indian patrols.

To say that these patrols were sent to provide a nucleus for the people of Kashmir to rally around and rise against Indian occupation forces is not correct. After the 1965 War when we were together in Staff College Quetta[1], I asked Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik whether there was any basis for such speculation and whether he had previously made any contacts in held Kashmir or had arrived at any understanding with the political leaders in held Kashmir. He told me categorically that there was no such plan and he had not attempted to contact any political elements in held Kashmir before sending these patrols.

The Indian reaction to this move was very violent and they mounted a series of attacks across the ceasefire line in sensitive sectors like Nawseri, Chakothi, Hajira and Haji Pir Pass Sectors. These offensives were successfully contained. Sensing that these moves might be followed by a more serious threat, Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik felt concerned about the Munnawar Gap[2] in the Southern Sector. The Indians had become active in this sector and their shelling across the ceasefire line which came very close to Pakistan's border in this sector had assumed an alarming proportion.

To forestall a possible Indian offensive in this sector, Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik requested G.H.Q. for some heavy guns to retaliate against Indian shelling. Later on when I asked him

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[1]Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik was Commandant and I was the Chief Instructor of Staff College, Quetta at that time.

[2]Area along Munnawar Tawi in Chhamb sector (See Munnawar on map opp. page 42) which because of its proximity to Pakistan border and nature of its terrain is of considerable importance because any enemy move in this area can pose a serious threat to Pakistan territory and its main line of communication along Grand Trunk Road between Chenab and Jhelum rivers.

whether all possible repercussions of this move had been considered by him, he told me that he had presented a detailed appreciation to F. M. Mohammad Ayub in his operation room in Murree. In this briefing he had clearly pointed out that the counter-measures contemplated by him to discourage the Indians from embarking upon further offensive moves in Kashmir could lead to India starting a full scale war against Pakistan. He told me that his detailed appreciation included time and space calculations of possible Indian counter moves.

Dewa

To enable Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik to carry out his plan, G.H.Q. ordered 4 Corps Artillery to go into action on 15th August, 1965 and bombard Indian strong points in Chhamb. This action was taken as a show of strength to discourage any possible Indian move in this sensitive sector and to find out the pattern of deployment of Indian artillery in the area.

4 Corps Artillery which in the absence of 4 Corps was in fact a G.H.Q. reserve of fire power had been concentrated in Kharian and placed at the disposal of Commander 12 Div. It had been made lighter and regrouped for this purpose. For this action it had 2 Field Regt. Arty., 39 Field Regt. Arty., 28 Medium Regt. Arty, Battery 10 Medium Regt. Arty, 111 Light Anti Aircraft Battery and 17 Corps Locating Regt. Arty. under command.

As this bombardment was not to be accompanied by any ground action by our troops, the operation was planned with a view to inflict maximum damage on the enemy by artillery action alone. To achieve this, very careful target analysis was undertaken with the assistance of local infantry commanders. The Indian posts and strong points on the other side of the ceasefire line were known to be built on the pattern of small fortresses consisting of more than one tier and made impregnable with stone and concrete. Their bunkers on the hills to the North which had been sited to dominate the entire valley below were equally strong and had concrete overhead cover.

Survey of gun areas and those targets which were visible from our forward positions was completed and telephone lines laid by

12th August. Utmost care was taken to maintain secrecy. Some of the measures employed to beat the Indian observation on dominating heights in the North were:—

(*a*) No abnormal activity was disclosed during day light.

(*b*) Gun detachments were taken from Kharian to dig gun pits during nights D-3/D-2 and D-2/D-1[1] and taken back. The gun pits were carefully camouflaged and concealed.

(*c*) Inspite of provocative fire by the Indian field guns in Chhamb, retaliation was limited to nominal activity by A.K. light battery of the Azad Kashmir Forces whose presence was known to the Indians.

(*d*) Guns were moved from their concrentration areas to hide behind gun positions on night D-2/D-1 and actual occupation was carried out on night D-1/D day.

(*e*) Registration[2] by firing was dispensed with. A special technique was employed to ensure accuracy which consisted of quick adjustment after the first round of predicted fire by observers specially positioned to correct fire on their particular targets.

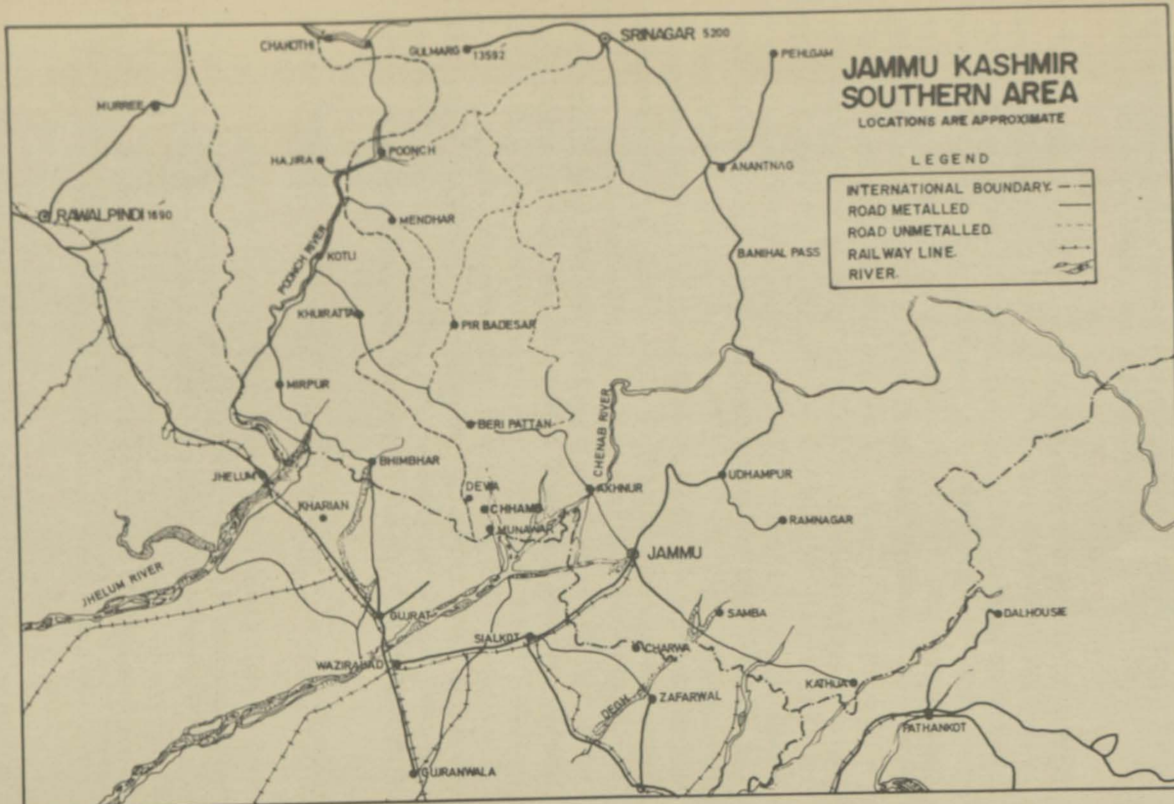
The bombardment started at 0745 hrs on 15 August. The original H Hr which was 0600 had to be changed due to poor visibility. The Fire Plan opened with intense and sharp counter bombardment on the offending Indian field regiment which had been accurately pinpointed by our sound rangers. The Indian field regiment was attacked with 4 medium batteries and 4 field batteries. The Air O.P.[3] who had been briefed to keep the Indian gunners under fire when they tried to pull out, directed our fire with such telling effect that this Indian regiment never recovered from the punishment it received that morning. An Indian artillery officer who was captured

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[1]D stands for Day of Battle.

[2]Registration is the term used for determining gun data of targets for subsequent engagement.

[3]Operation Post.


JAMMU KASHMIR
SOUTHERN AREA
LOCATIONS ARE APPROXIMATE
LEGEND
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
ROAD METALLED
ROAD UNMETALLED
RAILWAY LINE
RIVER
SRINAGAR 5200
PEHLGAM
ANANTNAG
BANIHAL PASS
CHAKOTHI
GULMARG 13592
MURREE
POONCH
HAJIRA
RAWALPINDI 1690
MENDHAR
POONCH RIVER
KOTLI
KHUIRATTA
PIR BADESAR
MIRPUR
BERI PATTAN
CHENAB RIVER
BHIMBHAR
UDHAMPUR
JHELUM
DEVA
AKHNUR
KHARIAN
CHHAMB
RAMNAGAR
MUNAWAR
JAMMU
JHELUM RIVER
GUJRAT
SAMBA
DALHOUSIE
SIALKOT
CHARWA
WAZIRABAD
KATHUA
DEGH
ZAFARWAL
PATHANKOT
GUJRANWALA

by us on 2nd September disclosed that the Commanding Officer of this field regiment was relieved of his command. The Indian gunners who had been very active until that morning did not dare to cross west of the Tawi for the next two weeks. They had the first taste of our counter bombardment that morning. From then onwards we always had them on the run.

After dealing with their field regiment, the guns were turned on Indian strong points from which they had been firing wantonly at our positions across the cease fire line. The shooting on that day consisted of timed concentrations upto 1000 hrs and from then onwards in accordance with a schedule of sequence of shoots and actions covering every hour of the clock until 1900 hrs. This ensured effective punishment of all Indian strong points and posts in turn, culminating in concentration of all field and medium guns on Indian bunkered positions in the hills on the North. According to an enemy message intercepted by 102 Bde., the local Indian Commander reported to his superior headquarters that "all their trenches and strong points had been destroyed" by our shelling. Vast material damage was inflicted and Dewa the Indian supply base was set on fire in the evening with medium smoke shells and the ammunition dumps in Dewa[1] were heard exploding for the next 24 hrs. When Dewa the Indian Supply base was being engaged I happened to be on the high ground over looking 28 Medium Regiment position. During the shelling I noticed a flash in the target area which indicated presence of petrol or ammunition. I told Lieut. Col. Lucman, C. O. 28 Medium Regiment who was with me to fire a salvo of smoke shells which set Dewa on fire. After completion of our task, the Corps artillery pulled back to Kharian on night 15/16 August.

Beri Pattan

Our second action on 18th August was the destruction of Beri Pattan bridge, a vital point on the main line of communication of the Indian occupation forces in this sector. A section of 28 Med.

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[1]A small village on the slope of hills in the North which had been developed by the Indians into a supply depot and a small cantonment. It was jealously guarded because the mother of the Maharaja belonged to a nearby village (For location see map opp. page 42).

Regt. was used for this action. It was an extremely difficult task,[1] the target being not more than approximately 30 feet in depth, the guns firing from an extreme range, and our observation post was 11,000 yards from the target. Due to poor visibility, the engagement lasted for approximately 5 hours during which over 10 direct hits on the bridge were scored before it collapsed. It was a fine demonstration of the superb technical skill of our gunners and contributed handsomely towards building up confidence and high morale in our formation.

Soon after 15th August, the Indians brought some medium guns to retaliate. They kept their 5.5 in. medium guns east of Tawi. From these positions they could engage our medium guns while staying out of our reach because of the advantage of about 2000 yards of range which they enjoyed over our 155 mm Howitzers. The Indians shelled our infantry positions heavily with their mediums for the next few days from these positions and the G.O.C.'s permission had to be sought to deal with them. To offset the disadvantage of range, we took our medium guns 6000 ahead of our last position and deployed them on night 21/22 August in a dry nullah just short of the cease fire line. Half an hour before opening up, a target was engaged with our field guns to draw fire from Indian mediums which confirmed that they were still in the positions which we had located earlier.[2] We then engaged the hostile batteries from our forward positions with concentrations on one Indian medium battery at a time. The enemy was so stunned with this sudden engagement of his guns which he thought were out of our range that there was no reaction from his side for more than 30 minutes. When he recovered from the initial shock, his medium guns retaliated violently but their fire was inaccurate and failed to distract our gunners.

It was here that we first tried our technique of instant retaliation which we had developed during our peace time training. From the time the Indians pulled the firing lever, it took us 5 to 6 minutes to pin point their guns and send our

1 Because of inherent dispersion in the shells fired from the gun aimed at the same target, it is very difficult to score repeated hits on a pin point target with a single gun.

2 We used this technique against Indian gunners more than once and every time succeeded in pin pointing their guns just before engaging them without disclosing our own location.

first salvo of counter bombardment. Our shooting was so accurate that once we picked up enemy guns they did not dare to fire from the same position. Just before we started getting the guns out of action, it was first light which gave the Indians a chance to conduct observed counter bombardment on our guns. Our gunners acted splendidly under fire and it was heartening to see them pulling out in perfect order while the Indian ranging rounds were falling plus and minus of their gun position.

6

OPERATION GRAND—SLAM[1]

Chhamb

Operation Grand Slam was launched in Chhamb Sector on 1st September, 1965 as a counter move to the Indian offensive at several important points all along the ceasefire line in Azad Kashmir. Its aim was to capture Akhnur and seal the Munawwar Gap to eliminate the threat to Pakistan from that direction. Reduction of Chhamb was the first phase of operation Grand Slam. For this operation 4 Corps Artillery was reinforced by G.H.Q. and had 2 Fd. Regt. Arty., 39 Fd. Regt. Arty, A.K. Bty., 8 Medium Regt. Arty. (5.5" How), 28 Medium Regt. Arty. (155 mm How), Bty. 10 Medium Regt. Arty. (155 mm How), Bty. 33 Heavy Regt. Arty (155 mm Gun), Bty. 34 Heavy Regt. Arty. (8" How), 111 LAA Bty., 29 LAA Regt. Arty, 17 Corps Locating Regt. Arty. on its order of battle.[2]

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1 Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik who planned the overall operation was an avid bridge player.

2 Artillery has three main types of units, viz field, medium and heavy regiments. Field regiments are equipped with comparatively lighter guns (25 pounders and 105 mm guns) whose mission is to give close support to infantry, Medium regiments are equipped with larger calibre guns (5.5 in. and 155 mm howitzers) which fire shells of 80 and 100 pounds. Their mission is to support armour and attack enemy guns and fortifications etc. Heavy regiments and super heavy regiments are less mobile, fire heavy shells upto 200 pounds. Their main task is to destroy enemy guns and engage targets which are out of range of medium guns. In 1965 war we had heavy guns which could fire 100 pounds shells upto a range of 25000 yards and 200 pound shells upto the range of 18000 yards. Locating units as their name suggests, locate enemy heavy weapon with the aid of radars, flash spotting and sound ranging instruments.

To crack strongly fortified Indian positions in Chhamb and continue the advance beyond it with all possible speed, Commander 12 Division's plan was to exploit our superiority in fire power and follow it up with swift armour action. After the capture of Chhamb the speed of the advance was to be maintained by quick build up of artillery to deal with enemy opposition wherever it was encountered. The artillery plan for support of this operation right upto Akhnur was based on this concept.

Preparations for opening fire for the battle of Chhamb started on 28th August. Gun positions were dug during nights, concealed and camouflaged. Ammunition was dumped in pits in gun position on night D-3/D-2 and D-2/D-1. Enemy positions and observation posts on the northern heights were unable to detect our preparations because we did not use vehicle lights during night and no activity was shown in day time.

The pattern of deployment of artillery for this battle was bold and unorthodox. It was dictated by the depth of the objective and the need for uninterrupted support throughout the battle without moving the guns. This requirement was met by bringing forward the 8" Bty. and the whole of 8 Med. Regt. beyond Padhar where I had sited my Command Post, ahead of all other artillery units deployed astride the main axis. These guns were brought into hides behind their positions on night D-2/D-1 and did not go into action until midnight on D-1/D day. It was appreciated that when the Indian medium guns pull back and redeploy during the battle to engage our troops from a position outside the range of our medium and heavy artillery deployed in depth, our heavy and medium guns deployed forward will take them on. Enemy mediums were to be initially engaged by our 155 mm Hows. and 155 mm Guns which could reach only upto Pallanwala. 8 Med. Regt. and 8" Bty. deployed forward (were to remain silent during this phase and) were not to disclose their position until ordered to engage enemy guns when they tried to support the Chhamb garrison from positions beyond the range of our depth guns.

An elaborate observation plan was prepared to ensure continuous and effective engagement of enemy positions. Special

observers were positioned to adjust predicted fire where necessary. A flash spotting[1] base was set up on the southern flank at Mattewala from where it could observe enemy guns as well as his depth positions which were not visible to our main O.P. This base commanded an excellent view of Chhamb and Pallanwala. Air O.P. was assigned the task of dealing with opportunity targets, especially in the rear areas of the enemy.

To deny observation to the enemy on the hills in the north, a roving section of 28 Med. Regt.[2] was deployed with its own special observer. At first light on D day this section was to engage in rotation all known enemy strong points on these heights and destroy them with precision shoots. Indian O.P.s which might escape complete destruction were to be blinded with smoke to screen the attacking troops.

Chhamb was very well guarded. Apart from its very strong fortifications, the Indians had by then increased their forces in Chhamb to seven battalions. To deal effectively with enemy strong points and reduce opposition to the minimum the Fire Plan[3] was designed to produce maximum shock effect, and overwhelm the defenders by delivering accurate massed fires of a large number of mixed calibre on all known enemy positions. Since several enemy posts were sited along the C.F.L.,[4] it was necessary to knock them out before our attacking troops broke cover at first light. A 90 minutes pre H Hr intense bombardment of these positions was to take care of this. The Fire Plan after H Hr consisted of timed concentrations for the first phase of the attack followed by concentrating on call. Some of the enemy strong points were to be attacked with as many as thirteen batteries of all calibres. The accuracy of fire which was considered the key to success was to be ensured by special observers who were to give necessary corrections after seeing the first round of gun fire on these targets. A separate

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[1]A device for determining the exact location of enemy guns by pin pointing their flash when they are firing.

[2]A section of two guns detached from its parent unit for independent task.

[3]Fire Plan is a timed programme for engaging targets.

[4]Ceasefire Line.

timed counter bombardment plan was laid on to deal with all located hostile batteries before the attack was launched.

Corps Artillery command post was established on the evening of 31st August in the gun area at Padhar. The Corps artillery headquarters was functioning on reduced establishment and lacked its counter bombardment complement. To overcome this handicap, 17 Corps Locating Regiment had been trained to perform the dual function of locating as well as counter bombardment. Its Regimental command post was sited along with our main command post. This arrangement worked admirably and was maintained throughout the war. Deployment of artillery and the dumping programme were completed by midnight 31 August and the stage was set for the battle of Chhamb.

When we opened fire at H-90, before the H Hr which was 0500 Hrs on 1st September, complete surprise was achieved and the opening rounds of concentrated fire of whole of Corps artillery had a stunning effect on the enemy. The panic in enemy ranks which ensued lasted throughout the battle and it appeared that majority of the Indian garrison in Chhamb had abandoned their posts before our troops closed on them. Chhamb was reached at 0830 hrs. But for a hold up in the South where the attacking troops got involved with the Indian post of Burejal instead of by-passing it as ordered by Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik, the battle would have been over by midday. The enemy in Chhamb fought stubbornly to avoid being caught while crossing the Tawi in day light. Inspite of it, Chhamb would have fallen much earlier had our troops on the outskirts of Chhamb pulled back to enable the Corps artillery to flush the enemy out with fire. Their attempts to reduce Chhamb with their own weapons and tanks delayed the fall of Chhamb and this phase of the battle dragged on until late in the afternoon. In the meantime, with the exception of a few pockets of resistance which lurked here and there, the Indian garrison in the rest of Chhamb sector had yielded to the combined action of our armour and infantry and the weight of our fire. The Indians were so stunned and bewildered that a company of Sikh Light Infantry waited in their post the whole day with white flags to be taken prisoners until they were rounded up by Major Babar[1] who landed his helicopter in the vicinity of this post by mistake.

[1]Later promoted Major General.

The shattering effect of our shelling of enemy defences was achieved by the superb accuracy of our gunners. The ruins of the small Indian cantonment of Dewa which was completely reduced to ashes offered a vivid proof of the devastating effect of our fire. An Indian Artillery F.O.O.[1] who was captured by us on 2nd September volunteered the information that he and his company commander found themselves alone in their post after it had been engaged by us, the whole company having abandoned their post due to the intensity of our shelling.

Our Air O.P.[2] did an excellent job throughout the battle. The pilot inflicted crippling blows on the enemy whom he caught in the open while running back in confusion. We effectively engaged with medium and heavy guns a large concentration of enemy vehicles who were trying to cross the Tawi.

Our counter bombardment was as effective as our supporting fire. Our accurate pre-H hr bombardment of the hostile batteries which had been previously located, completely demoralised the Indian gunners. Their medium guns on the East of Tawi were chased out of effective range of our attacking troops by impromptu counter bombardment. This technique of instantaneous retaliation had been developed by the Corps artillery almost to perfection. Our locaters[3] picked up the hostile guns the moment they opened up and passed the data direct to our adhoc counter bombardment command post from where immediate retaliation was ordered. The whole process did not take more than a few minutes. The effectiveness of each engagement was checked by tracking our own shells using the technique of sound to sound ranging. Although the credit for this spectacular performance is due in a large measure to our locaters, the speed and accuracy of response from our medium and heavy guns was no less important. The Indians paid a befitting tribute to this superb performance of our gunners by leaving behind a whole field regiment which had been subjected to our counter bombardment. More than one 25 Pounder guns of this regiment had received direct hits.

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[1]Forward Observations Officer who is with the leading echelons during attack.

[2]A light aircraft from which the pilot directs the fire of guns.

[3]Our Corps Locating Regiment was commanded by Lieut. Col. Malik Mohammad Ali.

The battle of Chhamb was practically over by the afternoon.[1] Preparations for move forward of artillery to support the advance started in the evening. The field regiments and one medium regiment started moving forward at 0400 hrs on 2nd September leaving behind two heavy batteries and one medium regiment to support the first leg of the advance beyond Chhamb. Inspite of extremely bad going, the leading regiments were in positions by first light on 2nd September to support the advance beyond Pallanwala. As soon as they reported ready, the remaining units of Corps artillery moved forward and by midday the whole of Corps artillery was in action behind Tawi to support the advance.

Although the advance to Akhnur had been delayed because the first phase of the operation had not been completed in time as envisaged by Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik, it was still not too late to make a dash for Akhnur and prevent the enemy from regaining balance and offering organized resistance further back. But for some sudden developments which arrested the speed and momentum of the operation, it would have been still possible to capture Akhnur within the next twenty four hours. The most important of these was the change in command at this critical stage of the battle with which I have dealt in the next chapter.

1 After the war, Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik and I were together in Staff College, Quetta. After going over my account of Operation Grand Slam he wrote, "A good and faithful account. I have no comments."

6

KASHMIR, 1965 THE SECOND PHASE

Change of Command in Kashmir

Change of operational command on 2 September, from Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik to Maj. Gen. M. Yahya Khan came as a surprise to those taking part in Operation GRAND SLAM and there was a great deal of speculation as to why it was considered necessary to do it at such a critical stage in the battle. Whatever might have been the reasons for it, the change had far reaching results as far as the progress of the operation was concerned. As was inevitable, valuable time was lost and the advance to Akhnur was delayed which enabled the retreating Indian troops to dig in at successive delaying positions while withdrawing to Akhnur[1].

The essence of pursuit as an operation of war is to maintain pressure relentlessly on withdrawing forces and to prevent them from occupying delaying positions which would enable them to gain time to prepare another strong defensive position further back. The withdrawing force tries to trade space for time which they need desperately to prepare for another battle further back. Having suffered a crushing defeat in Chhamb, the Indians crossed the Munawar Tawi in confusion and complete

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[1] In the official history of Indian artillery it is stated that it was another Infantry Brigade which was brought to Jaurian to establish a second line of defence. In their account of this battle they have said that after capture of Chhamb we chose to rest which gave them time to prepare another defensive position in the rear in Jaurian. (*History of Indian Artillery, New Delhi*, 1971)

disorder leaving behind their supporting field artillery regiment with all its guns and ammunition. Had our troops started the advance on the evening of 1st September as planned by Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik[1], it would not have been possible for the Indians to prepare another strong line of defence at Jaurian for which they got nearly 72 hours. Commander 12 Div.'s plan was to by pass Jaurian. But for minor skirmishes with Indian detachments covering their withdrawal, the next battle would have been fought in Akhnur as was envisaged and for which the operational plan and the fire plan had been already issued. Any counter move by the Indians to prevent the fall of Akhnur could not have materialised in time if Akhnur had been attacked as soon as possible after the fall of Chhamb. According to the original plan, after Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik had taken Akhnur he was to hand over to Maj. Gen. Yahya. The Indians had activated the whole front along the ceasefire line and Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik had to be relieved to deal with it. It was the timing of the change of command and the change in the overall concept of the operation by limiting its scope which frustrated the aim of the whole operation which was the capture of Akhnur.

On the afternoon of 1st September after Chhamb had fallen and the mopping up operation was going on, Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik who had conducted the battle from my command post in Padhar left for 25 Bde. H.Q. to tie up the next phase of the operation. I accompanied him to 25 Bde. H.Q. While the G.O.C. was giving orders for advance which had to be postponed to first light next day, I met Brig. Azmat Hayat, Commander 10 Bde.[2], who was to lead the advance astride the main axis Chhamb—Akhnur. He told me that he would move his tactical H.Q. in the evening to Padhar near my H.Q. which was on the main axis and we will start together in the morning. Later on in the evening his brigade major rang up to say that they were not moving their H.Q. and asked for a rendezvous where I should join the Brigade Commander. I suggested Munawar Road junction at first light which was agreed. During the night my H.Q. was busy with preparations for moving the guns forward except the long range heavy guns which were to support the first phase of the

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[1]Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik's plan envisaged the advance to start immediately after reduction of Chhamb i.e. 1st September.

[2]Ex. 7 Infantry Division commanded by Maj. Gen. A.M. Yahya Khan but for this operation it was under the command of Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik.

advance from their existing positions. I reached Munawwar cross roads at first light but did not find Commander 10 Brigade there. After waiting for a while I went forward to look for him. I met the C.O. 13 Lancers at Chak Pandat who had also been given the same rendezvous and was looking for Commander 10 Brigade. I went upto Tawi and thinking that our troops had crossed it went to the far bank and saw some Indian soldiers.[1] Realising that we had not yet secured the whole of the far bank I came back and resumed search of Brig. Azmat Hayat. Having failed to locate Commander 10 Brigade, I came back to Munawwar cross roads and contacted my command post on wireless to find out if there was any message for me.

While I was talking on the wireless a hail of bullets came from an adjoining field which took me by surprise for as far as I knew there was no enemy on our side of the Tawi. We answered the fire with the weapons we were carrying on us. After engaging us from different position, the firing from the field stopped. We carried out a search but could not find out who had been firing at us. Later on an Indian officer and his orderly who had been caught hiding in bushes in that area were brought to our command post by our men. We learnt from this Indian officer that he had escaped from Moel when it was under artillery fire and had not been able to cross the Tawi. He was hiding with his orderly in the field and when he saw me talking on the wireless set he took position and opened fire with his automatic rifle and kept firing until he ran out of ammunition. I was impressed with the courage of this young officer who while trying to escape did not miss the chance to take me on knowing that by disclosing his presence he ran the risk of being captured. It was an extraordinary act of courage which was clearly beyond the call of duty which required him to do everything possible to avoid being taken a prisoner.

In the meanwhile Maj. Aleem Afridi my G.S.O.[2] informed me on wireless that the C-in-C had come to H.Q. 25 Bde. and wished to see me. At about 10-30 A.M. while I was driving towards 25 Bde. Headquarters I saw Brig. Azmat Hayat having a conference with his battalion commanders. When I asked him the reason for not meeting me at Munawwar cross roads and why the advance had not started, he

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1Our tanks had crossed over the Tawi in pursuit of retreating enemy troops but had presumably withdrawn to our side of Tawi for night leaguer.
2General Staff Officer. Later Colonel.

informed me that he had not received the code word "Coca Cola" to start the operation and he had lost wireless contact with the Div. Commander. I was surprised to hear this because the Div. Commander had spoken to me on wireless a little earlier and had asked me to meet him at Moel. A few minutes later Brig. Zafar, Commander 25 Bde. arrived in a helicopter and asked Brig. Azmat Hayat to accompany him to his H.Q. to meet the C-in-C. I told Brig. Zafar that the C-in-C had sent for me also and I would like to go with them in the second helicopter which he had brought with him. Brig. Zafar's answer was that I was not required and they took off in the two helicopters.

Bitterly disappointed and completely at a loss to understand why we were not moving on and what was happening at H.Q. 25 Bde. I decided to drive to it. Maj. Aleem Afridi had been telling me repeatedly on wireless that I was wanted there and the C-in-C wished to see me urgently. It was a long way to 25 Bde. H.Q. and by the time I reached Moel it was 1.00 P.M. I found there elements of a Bde. H.Q. and asked a staff officer to ring up H.Q. 25 Bde. to send me a helicopter. Brigade Major 25 Bde. said on telephone that the C-in-C was holding a conference and he will find out if he could send the helicopter. Nothing happened for the next couple of hours. While I was waiting, Brig. Khurshid, Commander 7 Div. Artillery, came there in a jeep and informed me that the command had changed and Maj. Gen. Yahya Khan had taken over.

Later on, I learnt that the C-in-C had ordered the change because he had been told that the advance could not proceed because command and control had broken down and the guns had not moved forward to support the advance. I was surprised when I learnt this. While running around in that area I had myself seen the field and medium regiments in action just short of Tawi and I regretted that I did not get the opportunity to inform the C-in-C of the real situation. As far as the command and control was concerned, it is true that it was rather scanty but by no means ineffective. Maj. Gen. Akhtar had set up a Tactical H.Q. in Kharian and for the conduct of battle had planned to use the communication and other resources of my H.Q. His main H.Q. had to remain in Murree to look after full scale operations which were at that time going on in other

important sectors of Kashmir. Maj. Gen. Yahya after taking over command also used my H.Q. at Khaur while his main H.Q. remained outside the operational area. Until 6 September when I moved out of this theatre of war, he operated from his jeep with a staff officer. He had of course the advantage of having his main H.Q. within easy reach.

Far more important than the change in command was the last minute change in the overall concept and scope of operation GRAND SLAM. On 2 September I had moved my H.Q. to Chhamb in the Tehsil building on the near bank of the Tawi. Maj. Gen. Yahya conducted the battle for Jaurian from there. The day after Jaurian was taken (4 September), a message was received from G.H.Q. that the C-in-C was coming to meet Maj. Gen. Yahya in my H.Q. The C-in-C arrived in a helicopter at about midday and hurriedly conducted a conference with Maj. Gen. Yahya. After reviewing the progress of the operation he apparently told the Div. Commander to abandon the plan to capture Akhnur and take up positions on the high ground astride the road between Jaurian and Akhnur. I am not aware of the reasons for this basic change in the operation as I was not present in the conference. But I do know that the final phase of operation Grand Slam had been abandoned because when the C-in-C came out of the conference he said to me in his usual hustling manner that there was no point in taking Akhnur, which stunned me. The decision did not make sense to me. Akhnur was within our grasp and considering the state of morale of both sides and their relative strengths especially in armour and artillery, Maj. Gen. Yahya could have taken it without undue losses. Was it a political decision which gave Maj. Gen. Yahya no choice? If so the Indians succeeded in saving Akhnur through diplomacy, when it was not feasible to do it militarily. If the final objective of the operation was abandoned because it was considered that it might lead to an all out war with India, then the decision to stop short of Akhnur is all the more regrettable because it did not deter India from launching two days later an all out attack on Pakistan across the international frontier.

Having known Gen. Yahya fairly well for a long time, it was difficult for me to believe that such an unsound decision could be forced on him. Capture of Chhamb, Jaurian and Akhnur were

three phases of the operation which had been conceived and planned as a whole and the scrapping of its final and most important phase made little sense. Had Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik been in command at this stage in the battle, it would not have been easy to make him accept this decision.

The First Air Battle

When I received operation orders for the counter offensive to be launched in the Chhamb Sector on 1st September I had asked for a meeting with Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik. I met him in Rawalpindi on 29 August and explained to him that the weight of our artillery fire in this operation will be so overwhelming that the Indians artillery in support of their garrison in Chhamb will be totally incapicitated and it should be expected that they will employ their air force to retaliate against our guns. I asked him to lay on counter measures by Pakistan Air Force to defend my gun positions in case they were attacked by Indian Air Force. He agreed with my assessment of the situation. The clearance for this limited employment of P.A.F. had to be obtained from the President, Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub who was at that time in Saidu Sharif (Swat). A very important person in his Cabinet flew to Saidu Sharif to get the necessary clearance.

There were two actions by I. A. F.[1] on 1st September both of which I vividly remember. At about 4.00 P.M. when our troops had encircled Chhamb and were engaged in flushing out the remanants of the garrison, three Indian bombers appeared on the scene. When we saw these bombers from our Command Post we were very apprehensive because our tanks and infantry surrounding Chhamb were in the open in close formations and were very vulnerable to air attack. The bombers went into action and came low to drop their bombs. Before they could do much damage, there was a flash in the air on top of these bombers and before we could comprehend what had happened, the Indian bombers came down in three columns of smoke. I then realised that our Air Force had struck and the silvery streaks that had appeared in the air like a flash of lightning were our Star Fighters. This first action of our

[1]Indian Air Force.

air force was a tremendous morale booster and from then onwards we had complete confidence in our pilots' capability to give us protection from I.A.F. raiders. The P.A.F. kept it up right upto the end.

The second air action took place later towards the evening when six Indian Hunters came to attack our gun positions as I had anticipated. Our gun positions were so well concealed and camouflaged that the Indian pilots kept circling in the air on top but could not spot them. To prevent them from disclosing our positions, our anti-aircraft guns had been ordered not to open fire until they were told to do so. When the Hunters came very low looking for the guns, the tension created by their proximity proved too much for one of our anti aircraft gunners and he pulled the firing lever which disclosed 28 Medium Regiment positions. As soon as the anti aircraft gun opened fire the Indian aircraft turned all their cannons and rockets on one of the batteries of 28 Medium which resulted in one of their guns being hit. The ammunition inside the gun pit exploded when it was hit by a rocket. The crew of this gun were the first casualties of the war in our formation and I did not want this to affect the spirits of our soldiers. I immediately rushed to their positions which was close to our Command Post and assembled the whole battery and talked to them as the occasion demanded.

Battle of Jaurian

After having supported 12 Div. attack on Chhamb—Sakrna on 1 September, 1965, 4 Corps Artillery moved forward along axis Padhar——Moel—Munawar——Chak Pandit——Chhamb on night 1/2 September, 1965. 4 Corps Artillery at this time had under command 2 Fd. Regt., 27 Fd. Regt., 39 Fd. Regt., 8 Med. Regt., 28 Med. Regt., Bty. 10 Med. Reg.t, Bty. 33 Hy. Regt. Bty. 34 Hy. Regt., 29 L.A.A. Regt. less 2 Btys and 17 Corps Locating Regt.

H.Q. 4 Corps Arty. was established at Chak Pandat at approximately 1300 hrs on 2 September. The whole of Corps artillery was deployed in general area Chhamb—Chak Pandit—Munawar by about 1700 hrs. At 1730 hrs armour/infantry assault across the Tawi was supported by artillery fire. The units which had been deployed enroute to provide continuous fire support for the first phase of the advance moved up and were deployed in their main position by 1900 hrs.

A sound ranging base was deployed and a few hostile batteries were engaged on the afternoon of 3 September. On that day 27 Fd. Regt, which was in direct support of 10 Bde., joined us. Field regiments and medium regiments were moved across the river Tawi during the day and deployed in Palanwala. Same evening H.Q. 4 Corps Artillery moved to Chhamb and was established in Tehsil H.Q. G.O.C. 7 Div. Maj. Gen. A. M. Yahya Khan, came up to our H.Q. with his Tactical H.Q.

Soldiers' sense of humour is proverbial. When they are under the stress and strain of battle and every one is dead serious, some one comes up with a remark which acts like magic and relieves the tension even when they are under fire. On the night of 2nd/3rd September I went to see our units in the forward positions around Palanwala across the Tawi. I was accompanied by Lt. Col. Rashid Hayat, C.O. of our L.A.A. Regiment and Lt. Col. Malik Mohammad Ali, C.O. Locating Regiment. While we were returning to our Headquarters, we got sandwiched between two mechanised columns which had come to a stand still due to lack of traffic control arrangements. While we were waiting on the road, an automatic weapon opened up from the left of the road where we were stranded and soon it was answered with fire from the other side of the road. Before we realised what had happened, a large number of weapons including machine guns, mortars and anti-tank rifles on both sides of the road were exchanging fire and we found ourselves caught in this fusilade. Apparently someone had created a false alarm and our own troops on both sides of the road thought that they were firing at the enemy raiders who were trying to cut them off. Bullets were flying about so close to us that our chances of returning safely to our Headquarters and being able to tell the story appeared to be anything but bright. While I was weighing the odds in my mind, some one broke the silence and said loudly if were going to die, let us die with a feeling of well being while eating our dinner which we had brought with us. We all started laughing and were soon digging into our haversack meals which we spread on the bonnet of our jeep quite oblivious of the fireworks over-head which went on for quite sometime until someone brought the situation under control.

On 4 September C-in-C Pakistan Army accompanied by D.M.O.[1] visited our H.Q. and reviewed the operational situation. Progress towards Jaurian was maintained but attack on Jaurian by 10 Bde. which was to go in at 1400 hrs was postponed due to stiff enemy opposition reported by the Bde. Comd. In the evening when Comd. 7 Div. was informed that 10 Bde. attack to turn the left flank of Jaurian had not been successful, he simply said that he would see what could be done about it next morning and ordered us to take some rest and left for his Divisional Headquarter. At about 2.00 A.M. I looked into the Command Post to see if there were any messages. The officer on duty handed me a signal from 10 Bde. which said that they were going to attack Jaurian at 0600 hours in the morning. There was also a simple fire plan for the attack which consisted of a few battery and regimental concentrations. After superimposing medium and heavy batteries on the targets, Major Afridi, my G-II, started passing the fire plan to the adjutants of the regiments on the fire order line. As each order had to be repeated a number of times, I estimated that by the time the complete fire plan was put across there would not be enough time for firing units to plot the targets, work out the data and pass it to the guns. I told Major Afridi to stop and cancel all previous orders. We then plotted six targets at intervals of 600 yards in a straight line going through Jaurian and covering its flanks. The fire units were told to plot these six targets and get ready to engage them on orders.

I had quickly appreciated that if we concentrated the fires of all the eighteen batteries including nine medium and heavy batteries which were available for the operation, we had the capability of demolishing the defence completely and ensuring that when our troops crossed the start line there would be hardly any opposition. To avoid preparation of a lot of technical data in the unit command posts, the plan was to order concentrations before H-Hr by all available fire units on each of these six targets going from left to right and then lifting and dropping their fires in the same order using the time on target procedure[2] which would ensure that all the shells land on the target at the same time with a stunning effect. I was confident that the massed fires of a larger number of guns of mixed calibres would cover the entire area so effectively that the enemy

1 Director Military Operations.
2 The time the shell would be in flight is added to the time for firing each gun which ensures that all shells land on the target simultaneously.

opposition would be completely smashed and an elaborate timed fire plan would be unnecessary to support the attacking troops. These pre- H-Hr engagements were intended to destroy the opposition with sheer weight and intensity of fire. It was not an ordinary pre-Hr bombardment whose object is to soften the enemy positions before the attack takes off. When the plan was executed the results were exactly as I had anticipated and when Maj. Gen. Yahya sent a helicopter to fly over the target area, the pilot reported that the whole system of defence in Jaurian had been completely destroyed and there was no sign of enemy except abandoned guns, vehicles and other equipment. The Indians had again left behind a whole regiment of field artillery and fled as they had done in Chhamb[1].

Guns are the colours of the army. When I saw the guns abandoned by the Indian gunners I was reminded in contrast of an episode in the history of the First Regiment of the British Royal Horse Artillery. This Regiment was overrun by Rommel's tanks in the Western desert in the Second World War. The gunners of this Regiment fought back ferociously and engaged the German tanks with open sights at point blank range. After the action was over the Germans found the dead bodies of all the British gunners around their guns. Everyone of them had been killed while defending the guns. The officers in the gun position were found dead sitting on the layers seats. When the layers on the guns had fallen, the officers in the Command Post had rushed out and manned their places and kept the guns in action as long as it was possible.

When I reported the fall of Jaurian to Maj. Gen. Yahya Khan he complimented the gunners by saying "Let Jaurian be a feather in your cap". Our training during peace time had paid off and I felt proud of my gunners whose performance in battle had surpassed my expectations.

Heavy Guns Move Forward

After the fall of Jaurian, Maj. Gen. Yahya Khan told me that he wanted Akhnur bridge to be covered by our heavy guns. To get

1 In the "History of Indian Artillery" it is recorded on page 225 'At 1630 hours the shelling of the gun areas became intense and persisted over a period of three hours. Two of 161 Field Regiment guns received direct hits and the ammunition started exploding'.

the guns in position to carry out this task we were doing our best to push them forward with maximum speed. While we were in the process of setting up our command post in Khaur Police Station on the Palanwala-Akhnur Road, I heard the rumbling noise of the tractors towing our heavy guns. I rushed out and stood on the road to wave to the gunners. The Havaldar of the leading gun waved back at me with a broad grin and shouted cheerfully "we will be there in no time". In these few words he assured me that he was aware of the urgency of the task assigned to his unit and I could take it for granted that no effort was being spared to execute it in the quickest possible time. These men had had very little rest or sleep for the last one week but it had not dampened their spirit and this enthusiastic response was an unmistakeable proof that they were being sustained by an inner strength which is the best definition of morale that one can think of.

Orders for the movement and deployment of Corps Artillery for the whole operation from Chhamb to Akhnur had been issued before the operation was launched. Immediately on capture of Iaurian I stepped up the Corps artillery for the next phase of the operation. The general pattern of deployment of artillery was that there were guns both ahead and short of Khaur where our H.Q. had been established. 155 m.m. guns had been moved up and they could now reach Akhnur. Tactical H.Q. 7 Div. joined our H.Q. the same day and the advance continued. A sound ranging base to locate enemy guns was deployed ahead of Khaur by 17 Corps Loc. Regt. which provided accurate location of enemy guns which were promptly engaged and silenced.

Maj. Gen. Yahya visited our Command Post in Khaur Police Station on 5th September. When he prepared to leave for his Divisional Headquarter at dusk and got into his helicopter, four Indian Hunters appeared in the sky and attacked the helicopter with machine guns and rockets. While others took cover, Maj. Gen. Yahya was forced to keep sitting in the helicopter throughout the air attack. Luckily there was an anti-aircraft gun in the vicinity which had been sited there to protect a nearby medium regiment against air attack. The Havaldar on this gun fought back fiercely until the Hunters had fired all their ammunition and retreated. It was the gallant action of this Havaldar which imposed caution on the

Hunters and prevented them from coming low and delivering their fire accurately. His deterrent fire prevented the aircraft from scoring a hit on the canopy of the helicopter which was their target. After the air raid was over, Maj. Gen. Yahya came out of the helicopter and asked me to take him to the anti-aircraft gun which had engaged the Hunters. When he saw the Anti-Aircraft Havaldar, he said to me "Tell this Havaldar what he has done. He has saved my life". The Havaladar had also been under constant fire of the Hunters, who attacked him in turn to cover others which went for the helicopter.

On the morning of 6th September, 1965, Maj. Gen. Yahya Khan came to our H.Q. and held a brief conference in which he informed us that the Indian army had launched a two pronged attack across the international border at Wagah and Harike. G.H.Q. had ordered that our Corps artillery after detaching some units was to move to Sialkot. One armoured regiment was also detached for employment elsewhere. Before Maj. Gen. Yahya Khan concluded his conference, a staff officer came with a wireless message from his main H.Q. G.H.Q. had enquired whether he could take Akhnur if the Corps artillery and the armoured regiment were not taken away from him. When Maj. Gen. Yahya read out this message, we waited anxiously to know his reaction. He deliberated for a moment and then turned to the staff officer and said 'No'.

Was it that he considered that defence against the invasion of Pakistan was more important than capture of Akhnur or was it that he realised that the opportunity for capturing Akhnur by one quick knock out blow as originally conceived by Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik had been lost because of the delay caused by the change of command and the subsequent change in the concept and the conduct of the whole operation. Whatever his reasons might have been for this momentous decision, he did not say a word about it and there was no discussion. Later on when he visited Staff College Quetta[1] as C-in-C of Pakistan Army I ventured to ask him why he did not take Akhnur. His reply was short and crisp. All he said was "you know I was told not to do so".

We handed over operational control of artillery units in Chhamb Sector to H.Q. Arty. 7 Div. at 1030 hours leaving behind 2 Fd. Regt.

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1 I was appointed Chief Instructor, Staff College, Quetta, after the war.

Arty, 27 Fd. Rgt. Arty, 28 Med. Regt. Arty. (including Bty. 10 Med. Regt), Bty. 33 Hy. Regt. Arty. (155 m.m. gun) and Bty. 29 L.A.A. Regt. Arty.

Reflections on Akhnur

Apparently what had happened was that having given his approval to the launching of this limited offensive, F.M. Ayub had second thoughts after it had been launched. It is highly likely that after Major General Akhtar Malik's success in Chhamb, when the capture of Akhnur was within sight, some foreign power intervened on behalf of India and persuaded F.M. Ayub to abandon the capture of Akhnur which was the final objective of the operation. It is also likely that it was conveyed to him that the loss of Akhnur would be such a serious blow to India's military presence in Kashmir that India might retaliate by attacking Pakistan across the international border. If F.M. Ayub adopted this course under pressure of any foreign power whom he had called 'friends not masters' in his book, then in this instance he acted as if they were our masters. If they were our true friends, as the Field Marshal hoped, after they had prevented the capture of Akhnur one would have expected that they would have also prevailed upon India not to invade Pakistan.

My assessment of the reasons for the modification of operation Grand Slam is confirmed by the fact that on the morning of 6 September when Major General Yahya was informed by G.H.Q. of the invasion of Pakistan by India, they also enquired from him if he could take Akhnur. Apparently G.H.Q. had done some quick thinking but instead of ordering Maj. Gen. Yahya to take Akhnur they left it to him to decide whether it could be taken or not. Had Maj. Gen. Yahya acted boldly in this situation it was still not too late to implement the final phase of the operation. The Indians were on the run and their morale had been completely shattered. With his superiority in armour and artillery, Maj. Gen. Yahya could have clinched the issue and placed Pakistan in a very strong position. When I cast my mind back on these momentous events, I am inclined to think that the removal of Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik from command after he had taken Chhamb had also something to do with the decision to curtail the scope of operation GRAND SLAM which had been brilliantly conceived and planned by him and which he would have executed equally brilliantly if the opportunity to do it had not been

wrested from him after he had successfully completed the first phase of the operation.

In the meantime events were moving fast and before the full realisation of India's intention dawned on the people of Pakistan, they discovered on the morning of 6th September, 1965 that the Indian troops had already crossed their borders. The Indians threw every thing into their bid to destroy Pakistan and undo partition. When they failed to achieve their aim, they attempted to cover their failure by claiming after the war that their objective was limited to destruction of the Pakistan army. Since the Indian army's losses in the war were far greater than those of the Pakistan army, this playing with words did not make their claim less absurd.

7

THE SEPTEMBER 1965 WAR

India attacks Pakistan

India attacked Pakistan on the morning of 6 September, 1965. So far India's hostility towards Pakistan had been limited to undermining our position internationally, by anti-Pakistan propaganda at home and abroad and massing of her troops on our borders now and then, either to divert the attention of her own people from internal problems or just to bully a smaller neighbour. It was for the first time in the history of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent that the sanctity of the international border between the two countries was violated when India launched an all out war of aggression against Pakistan.

The fighting in Jammu and Kashmir which preceded it cannot condone India's aggression against Pakistan because there too it was the Indian army which had launched a full scale offensive all along the ceasefire line, particularly in Nauseri, Chakothi and Hajira Sectors and the Haji Pir Pass. The limited offensive in the Chhamb Sector mounted jointly by the Azad Kashmir forces and the Pakistan army was merely Major General Akhtar Malik's response to the Indian offensive. It is a different matter that the Indian army's offensive in Jammu and Kashmir did not make much headway whereas this offensive was a spectacular success. If the Indians felt that loss of Chhamb and Jaurian and the likelihood of fall of Akhnur would weaken their position in Jammu and Kashmir to such an extent that their very presence in Jammu and Kashmir

would be threatened, with their greater than 3 to 1 numerical superiority in Jammu and Kashmir (the Indians had a Corps plus as against our one Division) they could have demonstrated their capability to hold the disputed territory by force by taking whatever counter measures they deemed necessary in Jammu and Kashmir instead of starting a full scale war with Pakistan.

It has been argued that the capture of Chhamb by us and the threat to Akhnur had created such a serious situation for India that we should have expected that India would retaliate by attacking Pakistan. This possibility had been fully considered and all the preparations to meet such a contingency had been made. But Pakistan did not expect that India would take this extreme step. After all, in 1962 during the Sino-Indian war which resulted in a humiliating defeat for India, Pakistan had refrained from intervening to settle the Kashmir issue once and for all. If Pakistan had not given higher priority to living in peace with India than putting an end to India's military occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, all she had to do was to make a few well coordinated moves within the held territory to force India to come to terms with Pakistan. The course that Pakistan chose was prompted by very laudable motives but when all factors are taken into account the decision not to intervene in 1962 was at best a questionable decision. India's attack on Pakistan in September 1965 proved beyond doubt that Pakistan's decision not to intervene in 1962 Indo-China war to free the people of Jammu and Kashmir had ignored the hard realities of the situation and was based on wishful thinking.

Indian Bid to Take Lahore by Surprise

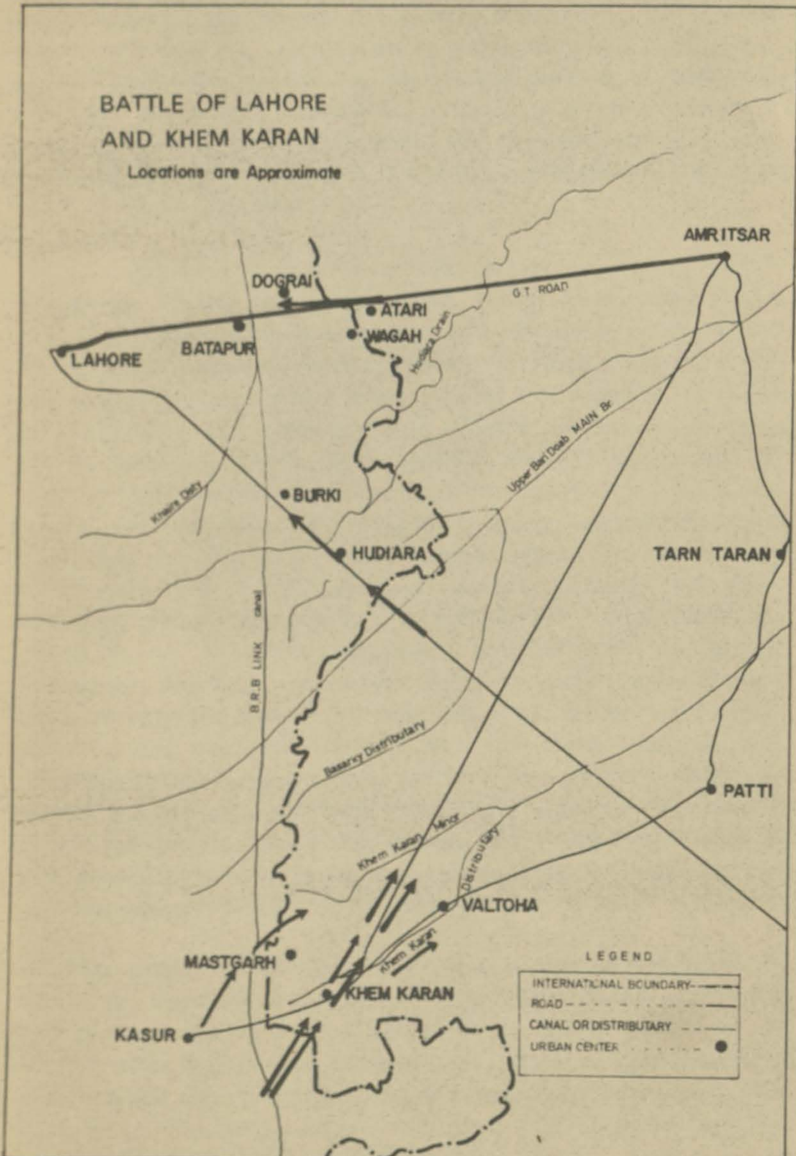
The war of 1965 between India and Pakistan ended in a stalemate. Both sides made dents in each other's territory in the border areas but neither side succeeded in capturing any objective of even the smallest strategic importance. The Indian attempt to capture the important city of Lahore by surprise by a two-pronged attack by their IV Corps along Harike-Burki axis and Wagah-Batapur axis was successfully halted by 10 Div. on the farside of the B.R.B. canal. Had we not withdrawn our troops from the border on this front 24 hours before the Indian attack, the Indians would not have found it easy to reach even the B.R.B. canal. When the Indians

crossed the border at Harike they were met by only two infantry companies which were deployed astride the Hudiara drain 4 miles short of the border. It was the gallant action of these handful of Pakistani soldiers which prevented the Indians from rushing to the bridge on B.R.B. canal at Burki and posing a threat to Lahore. They knocked out the leading Indian tanks and frustrated all attempts of the Indian leading troops to cross the Hudiara drain along the main road. The Indians were forced to give up their frontal attacks and make wide outflanking moves to reach the canal. These two companies succeeded in delaying the Indian advance for nearly 24 hours which provided ample time for an infantry brigade of 10 Div. to take positions which the Indians were never able to pierce.

The sequence of events on the Wagah-Batapur axis followed the same pattern. Here Commander 10 Div. launched the counterattack with his reserve brigade under command of Brigadier Qayyum Sher who succeeded in recapturing part of the far bank of the B.R.B. canal on the western side of the main bridge.

No satisfactory explanation has been put forward for the withdrawal of troops from the border 24 hours before the Indians launched their attack. Whether it was done on the orders from G.H.Q. or any local Commander did it on his own initiative to avoid creating tension along the border, this action was devoid of foresight and imagination and had it not been for the courage and determination of the light screens left behind, the Indians might well have succeeded in rushing to the bridges on the canal and getting within striking distance of Lahore.

It was in Burki on the near bank of the canal that Major Aziz Bhatti fought a memorable action in which he laid down his life. Immediately after the ceasefire I visited the scene of this action and had the artillery observer, who was with Major Aziz Bhatti, describe the action to me. It was an incredible feat of heroism. His company was deployed on the near bank a few hundred yards short of Burki village which had been occupied by the Indians. A troop of Indian tanks took positions west of the village and started shelling Major Aziz Bhatti's position. He came out of his trench and stood on the canal bank and gave orders for engagement of these tanks. The


BATTLE OF LAHORE
AND KHEM KARAN
Locations are Approximate
AMRITSAR
DOGRAI
ATARI
G.T. ROAD
WAGAH
BATAPUR
LAHORE
Upper Bari Doab MAIN Br
BURKI
HUDIARA
TARN TARAN
B.R.B LINK canal
Basarky Distributary
PATTI
Khem Karan Minor
Distributary
VALTOHA
MASTGARH
KHEM KARAN
KASUR
LEGEND
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
ROAD
CANAL OR DISTRIBUTARY
URBAN CENTER

Indian tanks spotted him and engaged him with their main armament. He defied the Indian tanks and did not move an inch from his position and continued to give orders to the guns. Shells from Indian tanks were bursting right and left of him and a tree next to him was up-rooted by a shell but he kept standing and fighting back until he was hit by a shell. The courage and the spirit of defiance and contempt for danger which he displayed in face of heavy odds and certain death was truly symbolic of the spirit with which the whole of the Pakistan army was imbued while fighting in the defence of their homeland in the September 1965 War.

The Indians launched their main offensive in the Sialkot Sector at Charwa two days later. They committed their armoured division along with three infantry divisions in this sector. The Indian offensive in this sector posed the most serious threat to the integrity of the entire framework of our defence. It aimed at outflanking and masking our 15 Infantry Division in Sialkot, and by brushing aside the light opposition which they expected to meet on their way, break out into the hinterland and get behind our lines of defence. Had they succeeded in doing this, not only could they have cut our main line of communication in the area of Gujranwala, they would have been also in a position to overrun a number of our major centres of population and industry and focal points in our communication system. Practically all our fighting formations had been sucked into the peripheral areas and there were no reserves available to plug the gaps in the rear. Both sides had one armoured division each and it was expected that wherever it was employed to spearhead the attack it would be there that each side will seek a decision. Opposite the Indians in this sector was Pakistani 6 Armed Div. which was in fact an armoured brigade which had been reinforced with 4 Corps Artillery and one infantry brigade of 15 Division.

The battle which ensued is now known as the Battle of Chawinda which is the name of the village ahead of Pasrur on the road leading from Charwa on the border to Pasrur 30 miles short of Gujranwala—an important industrial town and focal point on the Grand Trunk Road, the main artery running from Karachi to Peshawar. I have described this historic battle in another chapter.

Pakistan's Counter-offensive—Khem Karan Sector

Pakistan army launched its counter-offensive in Kasur Sector along the axis Kasur-Khem Karan-Patti with Patti as its first objective. After effecting a crossing over, the 11 Infantry Division commanded by Major General Abdul Hamid Khan extended the bridgehead upto Khem Karan from where I Armoured Division commanded by Major General Naseer Ahmed was launched. I Armoured Division, however, did not succeed in reaching Patti.

After the ceasefire, I visited the H.Q. of II Division to find out why our counter offensive had not made much headway. When I saw Colonel Omar[1] who was Colonel staff of Maj. Gen. Hamid I couldn't restrain myself from saying "Omar what happened? It was within your grasp to change the history of the sub-continent". Colonel Omar did not say any thing then but a little later he took me to his operation room and described to me how the whole operation had proceeded.

Whatever might have been the other causes of the failure of our counter offensive, one thing stood out clearly and that was the lack of coordination between I Armoured Division and II Infantry Division. Had there been a Corps headquarter in Control of this operation, the results might have been different. Incredible as it may appear, in the whole of Pakistan army we had only one corps headquarter at that time which had been raised in 1951. We had all the components of another corps including the corps artillery to warrant the raising of at least one more Corps headquarter but for reasons best known to our High Command, a second Corps headquarter was not raised. There was even a Lieutenant General at hand who was in command of a division which is a Major General's command[2]. The result was that when Pakistan army was launched to meet the Indian challenge in September, 1965, its command structure was hopelessly inadequate to meet the requirements of a shooting war.

After the ceasefire I also visited Sulemanki Sector where 105 Infantry Brigade Group under Brigadier M. Akbar Khan[3] had

1 Later Major General.
2 A Corps is commanded by a Lieut. General.
3 Later Lieut. General.

surged forward and formed a sizeable bridgehead on the Indian side and eliminated the threat to the headworks. I did not get an opportunity to visit any scene of battle further south where the Pakistan army had made substantial gains.

Brig. Ahsan Rashid Shami, Commander I Armoured Div. Artillery, embraced shahadat in Khem Karan. When I Armoured Div. Artillery joined us in Chawinda I asked the staff officers who accompanied Brig. Shami on that day to describe to me the exact sequence of events which ended in the loss of one of our finest senior officers and an outstanding gunner. I learnt from him that Brig. Shami left his Headquarter and went forward to find out what was holding up I Armoured Division advance. On his way he picked up the Commander of the Armoured Brigade who was to lead the advance on the main axis and then dashed forward to find out from the leading elements what artillery support they needed to speed up the operation. Regardless of his personal safety, he drove forward until he realised that he had gone through the enemy positions covering the main road. When he turned around to go back, an enemy machine gun fired at him at point blank range. The other three occupants of his jeep escaped unhurt. His extraordinary courage and disregard for danger took him into the enemy territory where our armour could not reach. His determination to do his best to assist the troops he was supporting to accomplish their mission was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Regiment of Artillery to which he was proud to belong. The Regiment is equally proud of him.

8

THE MAJOR INDIAN OFFENSIVE

False Alarm at Jassar

How difficult it is to penetrate the fog of war to see things in their true perspective and arrive at correct decisions, especially in the opening round, was brought home to me on the very first day of the September War. After receiving my orders from G.H.Q. on the early morning of 6th September, I arrived at H.Q. 15 Div. in Sialkot at about midday. On arrival, I reported to Acting Div. Comd. who told me to take over command of 15 Div. Artillery as well. After seeing him I talked to his staff who could give me very little information about the operational situation at that time.

Next day, while I was waiting to see the Div. Comd., Col. Mehdi who was Col. Staff of 15 Div. took me to one side and asked me to persuade the Div. Comd. not to blow up the Jassar Bridge while our troops were still in the enclave on the far side. He appeared to be very upset and had apparently failed to convince the Div. Comd. not to blow up the bridge. I was not fully in the picture as to what was happening at Jassar until I overheard the Div. Comd. talking about it to G.H.Q. on telephone. I heard him saying on telephone that the Indians had launched their offensive at Jassar and had established a strong bridgehead across the river Ravi with their infantry and a number of Indian amphiblian tanks were in the process of crossing the river. The picture he was

painting on the telephone sounded very alarming indeed. While I was waiting to see the Divisional Commander, an engineer officer arrived who, from his appearance, looked as if he had come back after executing a demolition mission. Someone told me that he had been assigned the task of demolishing Jassar bridge and he had come to report the completion of this task to the Divisional Commander.

Soon after I received a message from H.Q. I Corps to report to the Corps H.Q. in Gujranwala immediately. I reached Corps H.Q. at about 5 p.m. Lt. Gen. Bakhtiar Rana, Commander I Corp briefed me about the situation in Jassar which was more or less what Comd. 15 Division had reported to G.H.Q. Lt. Gen. Rana told me that the Indians had established a bridgehead with one Infantry battalion and his assessment was that they would build it up to a Brigade strength by next morning. He ordered me to get Corps artillery into action to support the counter attack to be launched next morning to destroy the bridgehead. I immediately proceeded to Narowal and on the way gave orders on wireless to Maj. Afridi to move the Corps artillery for deployment in the area of Narowal in positions which had been previously reconoitred to meet such a contingency.

When I reached the Brigade Headquarter in Narowal, I found Comd. 15 Division and Brig. Abdul Ali,[1] Commander 24 Brigade already there. We were all surprised to learn from the local Brigade Commander, Brig. Muzaffaruddin, that the situation on his front was nothing like what it had been made out to be and that after the demolition of the bridge only four or five Indian soldiers had managed to crawl up to the near end of the bridge and he was taking action to deal with them. At about midnight Maj. Afridi reported to me that the Corps artillery was in action. I found that the alarm which had been raised had not ruffled Brig. Abdul Ali and although he had been ordered to move elements of his Bde. to Narowal, he had decided to wait until he could ascertain the situation for himself. It was just as well because the minor incident at Jassar proved to be a false alarm and the actual Indian attack came from a different direction at a different point opposite to which Brig. Abdul Ali's brigade was deployed. The Indians succeeded in

[1]Later Lt. General.

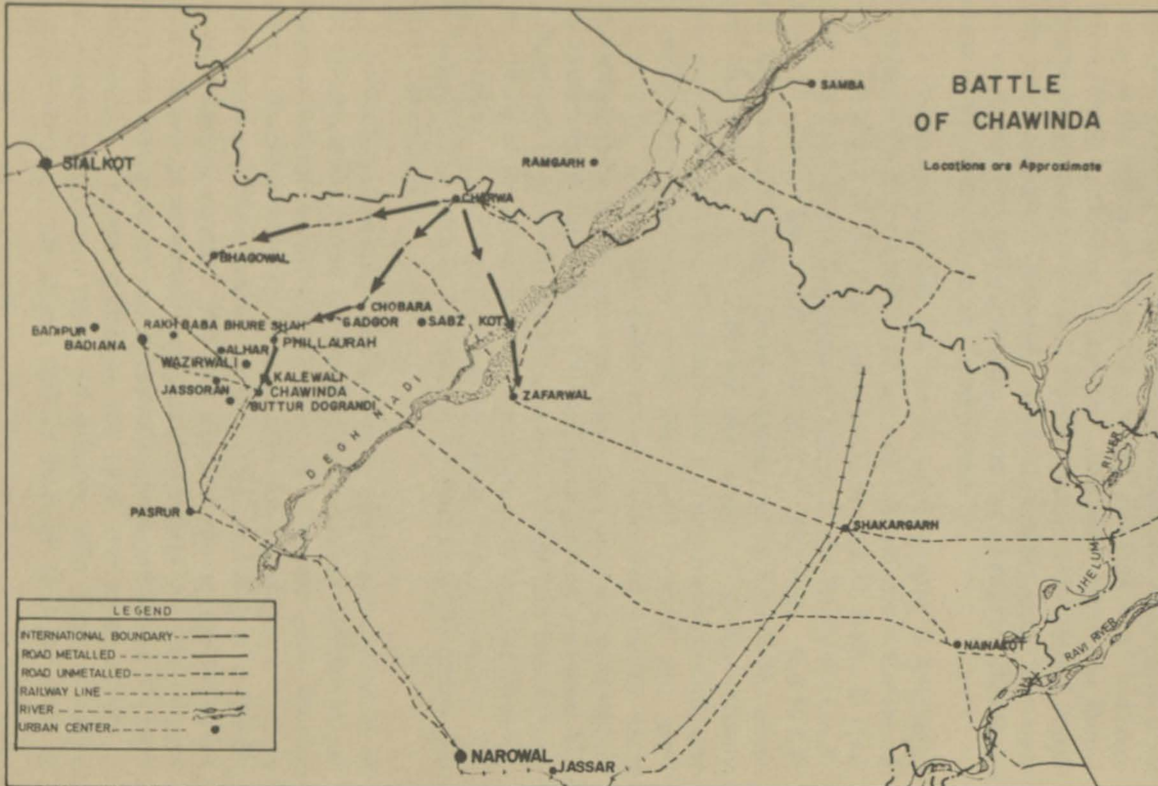
making us look towards Jassar while they crossed the international border at Charwa from the direction of Samba (see Map).

The Battle of Chawinda

In the September, 1965 war Chawinda was the scene of the biggest battle of this short war. It was here that the Indian army launched its major offensive and went all out to achieve decisive results.

My account of this battle describes only the part played by artillery in this historic battle because my task was to provide fire support to our infantry and armour who fought magnificently in defending this vital sector and prevented the enemy from achieving a breakthrough. Needless to say that it was only because they fought so gallantly and held their ground that artillery could play its supporting role effectively. I Armoured Div. which spearheaded the Indian attack was the chief offensive weapon of the Indian army. Its employment here alongwith at least three infantry divisions operating on its flanks with other follow up formations in the rear was a clear proof that the main Indian offensive had been launched here.

From their point of view, it made good sense. If they could brush aside the light opposition which they expected to meet near the border they would out-flank 15 Div. which had deployed only one infantry brigade to guard the approaches into this area, the Indian armour could then roll on to the Grand Trunk Road in the area of Gujranwala and cut our main line of communication at this vital point. To negotiate the water obstacles on the way they had brought with them a fleet of vehicles loaded with bridging equipment which was held back in rear echelons awaiting orders to move forward. A supporting or subsidiary attack was to be launched against Sialkot by 26 Indian Infantry Division in Jammu to fix 15 Div. which was defending the main axis Jammu-Sialkot. The area they had selected for their main offensive was ideal tank country as against the heavily water logged tract in the Khem Karan Sector where we launched our armoured division, apparently without having collected sufficient data about the terrain before hand.


BATTLE OF CHAWINDA
Locations are Approximate
SAMBA
RAMGARH
SIALKOT
CHARWA
BHAGOWAL
CHOBARA
GADGOR
SABZ KOT
BADIPUR
BADIANA
RAKH BABA BHURE SHAH
PHILLAURAH
ALHAR
WAZIRWALI
KALEWALI
JASSORAN
CHAWINDA
BUTTUR DOGRANDI
ZAFARWAL
DEGH NADI
PASRUR
SHAKARGARH
RIVER
JHELUM
RAVI RIVER
NAINAKOT
NAROWAL
JASSAR
LEGEND
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
ROAD METALLED
ROAD UNMETALLED
RAILWAY LINE
RIVER
URBAN CENTER

When the Indians launched their attack from the direction of Samba, there was only one infantry brigade facing it. After the covering screens had withdrawn from the border and the Indians started advancing towards Phillaurah astride Charwa-Pasrur Road, the presence of the Indian I Armoured Division was discovered from a copy of the operation order found in an Indian tank which had been knocked out in the first encounter. This information was immediately transmitted to General Headquarters. The General Headquarters took nearly forty-eight hours to decide upon their next move. Our operational plans had perhaps not taken into considerations all the options open to the aggressor.

4 Corps Artillery had the honour of supporting 6 Armoured Division in the historic battle of Chawinda. It had under Command I.S.P. Fd. Regt., 31 Fd. Regt. (less bty.), Bty. 39 Fd. Regt., 8 Med. Regt. less bty.), 33 Hy. Regt. (less bty.), Bty. 34 Hy. Regt., 111 L.A.A. Bty., 17 Corps Loc. Regt. and 15 S.P. Fd. Regt. and 16 S.P. Fd. Regt. w.e.f. 16 Sept. Except a battery of 39 Fd. Regt. which was deployed in area Zafarwal the whole of Corps artillery was echeloned between Chawinda and Pasrur. Although this was a defensive battle, guns were kept well forward and used aggressively. During the battle enemy tanks and infantry came menacingly close to our gun areas more than once and guns had to be alerted for direct action. We had some anxious moments, but pulling back of guns was firmly ruled out. While fully appreciating the gravity of the situation and the magnitude of the risk involved, interruption in artillery fire during these critical moments was not allowed and faith in our ability to beat back the attack was never abandoned.

In this battle we followed the same pattern in our application of fire which we had tested and found to be extremely effective in our previous actions against the Indians. In Chhamb and Jaurian we had discovered that the enemy could not withstand our massed fires which we were capable of delivering accurately and rapidly in considerable volume. We had crushed enemy opposition in these battles by accurately concentrating a large number of guns on enemy strong points and defensive localities and forced his early withdrawal. The same technique was used with equal success in Chawinda against enemy tanks and infantry who kept attacking our defensive positions almost without stop for 16 days. Most of

the attacks mounted by the enemy were broken up by artillery fire. On the east of Chawinda, the enemy was prevented from coming close to our positions by our artillery although he made repeated efforts to outflank Chawinda from this direction. The nearest he came to this position was approximately 600 yards when he was forced to withdraw after his leading tanks had been destroyed and accompanying infantry badly mauled. On two occasions the enemy succeeded in partially over-running the western flank of our defences but these attacks too were repulsed with massed fires of all the guns. Casualties inflicted on the attacking troops by our shelling were so heavy that in one of the actions even after he had left our main defensive position behind him, the enemy's will to continue the attack was broken and he was forced to withdraw.

Upto 16 September the Indians concentrated their tanks and infantry and attacked on a narrow front. After 16 September when one of the enemy's most determined attackin which he employed the bulk of his armour and infantry was repulsed, the enemy changed his tactics and started attacking on a broad front with several comparatively smaller tank infantry groups. This was the severest test of the technical efficiency, grit and determination of our gunners. With remarkable speed and accuracy the massed fires of artillery swung day and night from one end of the battlefield to the other attacking enemy tanks and infantry wherever they appeared and enabled our armour to foil his repeated attempts to blow a hole at some point in our defences which were stoutly held by our infantry. Because of their long reach our medium and heavy guns played a conspicuous part in this phase of the battle. Almost all prisoners of war captured on this front volunteered the information that the Indians dreaded our artillery, particularly the heavy guns. This was well illustrated on the night of 17th/18th September when a large number of enemy infantry soldiers preferred to surrender rather than retreat through our fire after their last attack in which they employed two infantry divisions and their armoured division was beaten back and we were chasing the retreating enemy with our fire.

In this operation speed was of utmost importance. As the battle gathered momentum and the enemy became more desperate, the demand on the gunners for instantaneous engagement of targets

all along the front increased correspondingly. The magnificient and heroic manner in which the gunners responded to each and every call for fire thrilled every soldier who had the privilege of taking part in this historic battle. Within the first couple of days of fighting we had the entire battle field so well 'taped' and procedures so stream-lined that the shortest possible orders were required to get the maximum fire. Perfect mutual understanding at all levels down to the layers on the guns produced the type of team work which alone could have produced such results.

Counter bombardment, in which our integral corps artillery specialised, played an important part in this battle. We had previously tested our counter-bombardment techniques successfully in Chhamb, Jaurian and Sialkot and gained complete ascendancy over enemy guns. Inspite of the enemy's vast superiority over us in this battle, his guns were promptly silenced whenever they opened up. Our counter-bombardment was so accurate, and the enemy was so scared of it that he was forced all the time to keep his guns well back and he rarely fired large concentrations. They were particularly scared of our long range heavy guns. They scattered their artillery all over the battle field from Degh Nadi in the East to Bajragarhi in the West. Their 7.2" heavy guns seldom dared to cross the border. Indian counter-bombardment was generally inaccurate and ineffective. It failed to distract our gunners who never interrupted their fire due to enemy counter-bombardment. It was only when our medium and heavy guns were engaged in answering calls from our infantry and armour in repulsing enemy attacks and could not be lifted for counter-bombardment tasks, that the enemy artillery found it safe to fire on our F.D.Ls and gun positions.

Ground in this sector being absolutely flat with clumps of tree dotted all over it, observation presented a serious problem. Hardly any ground observer could see beyond a thousand yards. This was overcome largely by use of continuous observation and direction of fire with light aircraft who did an excellent job. During one major enemy attack which went well into the evening, the pilot kept directing the fire of the whole of Corps artillery on enemy tanks and infantry until the attack was beaten back. Our pilots did not consider any risk too great as long as they could ensure that no

enemy tank or infantry which came in the open anywhere along the whole front escaped our fire. Since the Indians assembled and formed up in villages which were thick with trees, our ground and air observers could not always pick them up in their concentration areas. On these occasions we directed our fire on targets which we located by intercepting enemy wireless messages which invariably proved to be effective. During one of his major attacks the enemy concentration was accurately pin pointed in our command post by intercepting a message passed on an enemy armour regimental net and every gun was turned on it. The Indians suffered very heavy casualties as a result of this engagement. Monitoring of enemy wireless nets also helped us in assessing the effect of our fire. It was encouraging to learn from the 'receiving end' that our fire had a deadly effect on the enemy and had caused confusion and panic in his ranks.

Our medium and heavy guns were the principal target of enemy air force in this sector. Since artillery had frustrated every attempt of their ground forces to reach their objectives, hardly a day passed when our gun positions did not receive two or three attacks by Indian fighters and bombers. Every time our L.A.A. Regt. came to our rescue and literally stood between our guns and the Indian Air Force. The A.A. gunners fought back so fiercely that the Indian pilots inspite of their desperate efforts to silence our guns did not succeed in putting a single gun out of action in this battle.

Although the Indians continued to make offensive moves in all directions from the time they crossed the border, the situation had more or less stabilised after their attack on 17/18 September was repulsed. Their offensive which had started with great fury and violence on 8th September started petering out after a week of continuous attacks to achieve a breakthrough at some point. Once the offensive had been blunted and the momentum of the initial attack petered out, Commander 6 Armoured Division started planning a counter offensive to eject the enemy from key areas which he had turned into strong points. Bhagowal was selected for this purpose. On 21st September I accompanied the Div. Comd. to Brig. A. A. K. Niazi's[1] H.Q. where the plan for the counter attack on Bhagowal was finalised. Brig. Riazul Karim was to spearhead the

1 Later Lieut. General.

attack with his armour and Brig. Niazi's infantry was to occupy the objectives and consolidate. A day earlier our air borne artillery observer had reported large scale vehicular movement by the Indians which looked like preparations for withdrawal of their 2nd echelons in anticipation of ceasefire.

All the preparations for the counter offensive were completed by the evening of 21st September. At 22.30 hours when we were issuing fire plans for this operation, orders were received from Corps. H.Q. calling off the attack. We were so confident of the success of this counter offensive that this unexpected development left us aghast. The Indian offensive had completely petered out. The arrival of elements of our 1 Armoured Division to reinforce us had materially improved our capabilities. Now was the time to go over to the offensive. It was difficult to comprehend the reasons for calling off the attack which had every chance of driving the invaders out of a large part of our territory under their occupation. The only explanation that one could think of could be that our Government did not wish to jeoparidise the negotiations for a ceasefire which were going on in the Security Council. This impression was confirmed from our C-in-C's remarks when he visited our sector after the ceasefire and addressed the senior officers to explain the reasons for Pakistan agreeing to a ceasefire. Before ending his talk, the C-in-C wanted to know if any one had any doubts to clear and then pointed to me and asked if I had anything to say. I got up and ventured to say that if our supplies situation especially of ammunition did not warrant continuation of fighting, only then the decision of the high command to agree to a ceasefire could be justified. The C-in-C confirmed this.

Later on after the disengagement of troops had taken place there were whispers that the supply situation even towards the end of fighting was not really so bad that it warranted abandoning of the offensive planned by the 6 Armoured Division for the sake of an immediate ceasefire. If it was so, then there was little justification for calling off the counter-offensive. The overall situation at that time gave no cause for concern. The Indian offensive had been successfully contained everywhere and its momentum had petered out. On the other hand the very fact that we were getting ready to launch a counter offensive

in a sector of war where the Indians had committed maximum forces was clear evidence that we had the capability and the will to fight on. There was no apparent reason for us to be in a hurry to sign a ceasefire agreement. I think that this was what our then Foreign Minister, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, meant when he said while addressing the Security Council that if necessary, we will fight on for a thousand years. What he said rhetorically was obviously intended to make it clear that when it came to the question of our survival Pakistan will never give up the fight and yield to aggression. His words truly reflected the feelings of every Pakistani soldier who was engaged in fighting the Indian aggression at that time.

9

ARTILLERY IN THE BATTLE OF CHAWINDA

The September 1965 war is one of the most important events in the short history of the Sub-continent for more than one reason. By attacking Pakistan, India left no doubt in the mind of our people about her aggressive designs and relentless hostility towards them. At the same time it made it clear to the people of Pakistan that until they are convinced of a basic change in India's attitude towards them, if they ever lower their guard, they will do so at their own peril. It also exploded the myth of numbers. Pakistan came out of this war with renewed confidence in her capability to defend her borders successfully against an enemy who enjoyed numerical and material superiority of at least four to one.

The account of the part played by 4 Corps Artillery in the battles of Sialkot Sector in the September 1965 War which I have given below should help to form some idea of how India threw every thing into their offensive in this sector in an all out effort to achieve decisive results and how the Pakistan army frustrated their designs despite the vast disparity in the relative strengths of the two sides. I have given a day to day account of the main battle which was fought in Chawinda. I must however reiterate that my account of this battle is confined to my own experience and is therefore by no means complete. This account has been extracted from the War Diary in which we reported the day to day events to General Headquarters during the war.

On orders from General Headquarters, 4 Corps Artillery rushed from Jaurian to Sialkot on 6 September. Eight Hunter aircrafts attacked our column while it was crossing River Tawi (near Chhamb) at about midday but very little damage was done. One soft vehicle was hit and a Junior Commissioned Officer of 17 Corps Locating Regiment injured. On night 6th-7th September all guns were in action in Sialkot in support of 15 Division. One medium battery was despatched to reinforce 31 Field Regiment which was in support of 24 Brigade in area Phillaurah.

On 7 September Corps Artillery was made responsible for entire artillery in support of 15 Division and set up its command post alongwith Headquarters Artillery 15 Div. At about 1400 hours Headquarters I Corps placed 4 Corps Artillery in support of 6 Armoured Division. I was summoned to Corps Headquarters in the evening and was ordered to provide support to Jassar force[1] in preventing the enlargement of enemy bridgehead and destroying it by 1st light 8 September.

By 0200 hours on 8 September bulk of heavy artillery, one medium battery and a sound ranging base were in action in area Narowal when information about enemy attack at Charwa was received and 4 Corps Artillery was ordered to move back.[2] Headquarter 4 Corps Artillery joined Headquarter 6 Armoured Division and guns remained in hiding near Milestone 11 road Daska-Pasrur throughout the day awaiting further orders. 1 (SP) Field Regiment and one more medium battery were sent to Phillaurah to reinforce 31 Field Regiment.

Since no orders were received from 6 Armoured Division till evening, with the permission of Divisional Commander I took my guns to Sialkot for counter bombardment against enemy artillery which had been very active on Sialkot front throughout the day. By midnight 33 and 34 Heavy Regiments were in action in their old positions and we carried out intensive counter bombardment with the help of 17 Corps Locating Regiment and silenced enemy guns. Enemy bombers raided our gun positions. Bombs fell close to the guns but no damage was done. By first light guns were back in

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1 This as mentioned earlier (p. 73) turned out to be a false alarm.
2 The point from which the Indian Armoured Div. was launched.

area Milestone 11 on Daska-Sialkot road. Commander 15 Division was informed by General Headquarters that an Indian message had been intercepted according to which Commander 26 Indian Division had reported to higher headquarters that he could not launch his attack on Sialkot on night 8/9 September because of very heavy counter bombardment which made it impossible for him to deploy his guns forward for attack.

While still awaiting finalization of 6 Armoured Division plan, Corps artillery was deployed in area Badiana from where fire support was provided to 24 Brigade in its battle in Chobara-Gadgor area on 9 September. Air Observer reported 3 enemy tanks knocked out by heavy guns.

On night 9/10 September heavy guns carried out harassing fire tasks against the enemy in area Charwa throughout the night. Enemy is believed to have suffered heavy losses from our shelling. This was confirmed by our patrols who reported extensive damage to enemy equipment and destruction of vehicles by our fire. In the evening the Commander-in-Chief told me on telephone from General Headquarters Operations Room that he wanted us to repeat our performance of Chhamb and Jaurian. His message was conveyed to every gunner in the formation.

On 10 September while planning was still going on in H.Q. 6 Armoured Division, 4 Corps Artillery continued to support 24 Brigade with medium and heavy guns from our command post in area Badipur, west of Badiana. This fire proved to be very effective in repulsing enemy attack against 24 Brigade and 25 Cavalry in area of Gadgor and Phillaurah. A number of hostile batteries were engaged effectively. In the meantime new gun areas around Chawinda and South of it were reconnoitred and prepared for deployment of Corps artillery in anticipation of 6 Armoured Division operation in this sector. By evening our guns were ready in these positions for action.

I moved Headquarter 4 Corps Artillery to Pasrur the same evening and set it up in a school building. Counter bombardment command post alongwith locating command post was amalgamated with the main command post and housed in the same building. The siting of our command post near the guns had a far reaching effect on the course of the battle as a whole.

On night 10/11 September 6 Armoured Division assumed control of the sector and 31 Field Regiment who had already been taken on Corps Artillery net came under command of 4 Corps Artillery. 31 Field Regiment alongwith 1 (SP) Field Regiment and Battery 8 Medium Regiment had been giving splendid support to 24 Brigade (Group) in area Chebara-Gadgor from night 7/8 September onwards. While providing continuous and maximum support these units ran many risks and suffered casualties in officers and men. They helped our armour in beating back several enemy attacks and took heavy toll of his tanks and infantry with their fire. They stuck to their forward positions until the last elements of our force fell back on the main defensive position in Chawinda as planned. 11 Cavalry and 9 Frontier Force relieved 24 Brigade and 25 Cavalry during the night in area Gadgor with the task of 'drawing in'[1] the enemy Armoured Division to enable 6 Armoured Division to destroy it. Unfortunately withdrawal of 11 Cavalry and 9 Frontier Force did not go according to plan. A large number of targets were engaged by forward observers of 1 (SP) Field Regiment and our Air Observer but the battle throughout the day remained very confused. F.O.O.[2] with a squadron of Guides Cavalry who had been sent forward to help 11 Cavalry and 9 Frontier Force reported enemy abandoned 5 tanks under our fire at the road crossing. A number of hostile batteries which were shelling 9 Frontier Force were engaged effectively.

We also answered calls for fire from Battery Commander in support of Guides from area Bhagowal on the left and enemy tanks which had occupied Bhagowal were forced to withdraw. Enemy was scared of our fire and did not attempt to reoccupy Bhagowal until night when our tanks withdrew to leaguer behind Badiana and there were no observers in the area to call for fire.

Indian Advance Halted

11 September was one of those critical days on which we fought desperately to keep the Indian armour at bay. The fortunes of the battle swayed to and fro in a manner that the outcome appeared to

[1]This plan was drawn up by Major General Sahibzada Yakub Ali Khan who was acting as a liaison officer for G.H.Q.

[2]Forward Observation Officer.

be absolutely unpredictable. The Indian armoured division had created sufficient room for itself to develop its maximum offensive capability and was attacking with all its might and fury on a narrow front along the road Charwa-Phillaurah-Chawinda to break through towards Gujranwala.

In our command post we were so busy engaging targets that when Lieut. Col. Abdul Rahman, C.O. I (SP) Fd. Regiment entered, I did not register his presence for quite sometime. I had left him in the Headquarter of 6 Armoured Division to act as adviser to the Div. Commander in my absence.[1] When I saw him I asked why he had left the Divisional Headquarter at that critical stage in the battle. He said he had come to seek permission to visit his regiment and see his officers who were in the forward most positions. I refused permission and told him firmly to go back and stay with the Comd. 6 Armoured Division. He pleaded with me vehemently to let him go because he wanted to see his young officers who had gone into action for the first time. When I found him so resolute, I reluctantly gave him permission but I had a premonition that I might not see him again.

Perhaps it was the ferocity of the battle that was raging at that moment which made me think subconsciously that moving around in the open in the enemy's target area at that time was like courting death. The reasons he gave me for going forward and the feelings with which he expressed them were so overwhelming that I felt that his mind was made up and inspite of the risk he was running, it was not proper to stop him from doing what he considered was his duty to his men and his officers. In less than an hour some one whispered in my ear while I was in the middle of engaging a target that the dead body of Lieut. Col. Rahman had been brought by his Subedar Major in a vehicle. He had been hit by an enemy shell which burst near his jeep while he was tying up artillery support with the C.O. of 11 Cavalry Regiment who had also been seriously wounded.

On 12 September besides counter bombardment against enemy guns, Corps artillery effectively engaged enemy tanks and infantry who remained active throughout the day and made several attempts

[1] I (SP) Fd. Regt. was the integral regiment of 6 Armoured Div.

to probe forward towards Chawinda and Badiana. Heavy fire had to be put down on enemy in Bhagowal to extricate Squadron 22 Cavalry which had run into a strong enemy tank and recoilless position in that area. Our Air Observer remained very active throughout the day along the whole front. Heavy gun position was straffed and rocketed by enemy aircrafts but no casualty was reported The fear of Pakistan Air Force and the hot reception the Indian pilots always received from our Anti Aircraft gunners made them feel too uncomfortable to do any accurate or aimed shooting. It was not uncommon for Indian pilots to unload their bombs in open fields where there were no targets of any description.

On 13 September enemy tanks became very active along the whole front from first light onwards. Indians made repeated attempts to push their tanks towards west of Chawinda from the direction of Alhar. Everv gun was turned on these tanks and they were smothered with artillery fire until they were forced to withdraw. Enemy tanks were simultaneously exerting pressure towards Badiana but to achieve maximum concentration we dealt with one threat at a time. Later on whole of Corps artillery was switched over to that flank and enemy advance was halted. We had arranged for our heavy guns and the medium battery in Sialkot to augment our fires for engaging targets in Bhagowal area. The effect of the cross fire of heavy and medium guns from opposite directions had a shattering effect on the enemy and thoroughly blunted his offensive. The enemy suffered heavy casualties and had to give up his attempts to break through Badiana that day.

In Zafarwal, 123 Heavy Battery helped 4 Frontier Force to break up a strong enemy armour and infantry attack. The battery destroyed 3 enemy tanks with its fire. The same battery also effectively engaged and silenced guns and mortars which were supporting enemy attack on Zafarwal. On that day enemy artillery remained active throughout the day in support of their attacks and eighteen hostile batteries were engaged. Enemy guns never spoke from the same position again.

On 14 September the enemy continued to exert pressure along the whole front but our fire did not allow him to close with our defence. The whole front was ablaze with artillery fire. Enemy

tanks and infantry were attacked with heavy concentrations wherever they appeared. To thicken up our concentrations in Bhagowal Sector from where enemy made repeated attempts to cut road Pasrur-Sialkot, fire of guns in Sialkot was again called through improvised communications. Field and medium guns fired over 100 rounds per gun this day while the expenditure of heavy ammunition averaged approximately 60 rounds per gun. Twenty-five hostile batteries were effectively engaged and silenced. Enemy tanks and infantry trying to creep up during the night were kept under continuous heavy fire.

In Zafarwal enemy launched a fresh attack in the morning which was beaten back with the help of artillery fire before it could close in on our defensive position. Our heavy guns knocked out two Centurion tanks in this action. After this the enemy refrained from trying this flank. That day 33 Heavy Regiment with their harassing fire destroyed enemy petrol and ammunition dumps in Kangre which kept burning till next morning.

Major Attack

On 15 September enemy mounted a major attack against Chawinda in the morning from Wazirwali and Kalewali The Indians used their armoured division and the mountain division for their attacks on 15th and 16th September. They were so confident, especially their armoured division, that they took it for granted that we will not be able to withstand their attack. In this they grossly underestimated the fighting capabilities of the Pakistan army and the Pakistan soldier.

From the moment the enemy appeared in the open we turned every gun on him until the momentum of his attack petered out and he was forced to withdraw with heavy losses. The effect of our fire was so shattering that although he had almost succeeded in outflanking our defences west of Chawinda in the area of the railway station, the enemy found it impossible to continue his advance and had to abandon the attack by 1030 hours. An idea of the extent of casualties inflicted on the enemy by artillery fire in this action may be formed from an engagement south of Kalewali at about 1300 hours on the same day. An enemy infantry company observed digging in this area was engaged with air burst by 31 Field

Regiment. Except for 4 or 5 men who ran back the whole company was completely wiped out. Our medium and heavy guns had a devastating effect on both tanks and infantry. Two hundred pound shells of our 8" Hows. and the stunning impact of 155 mm gun fire on enemy not only caused vast damage to men and material but also shattered his morale by their shock effect.

At 1500 hours the enemy renewed his attack on Chawinda and Badiana from the same direction. We had been following his preparations of this attack by intercepting the wireless net of one of his armoured regiments and had a fairly good idea of where the enemy was forming up. All the guns of the Corps artillery were turned on selected points in the forming up and assembly areas which we had divided into Corps artillery targets and passed their co-ordinates to all units. Every gun was concentrated on one target at a time. Kalewali and Phillaurah from where the attack was being mounted against Chawinda and Rakh Baba Bhure Shah in the West where a large number of tanks had concentrated to attack across road Pasrur-Sialkot rocked under our fire. Message passed on the enemy wireless net indicated that our fire had a paralysing effect on enemy headquarters and his follow-up echelons. Enemy tanks in the Rakh were effectively engaged and the enemy attack on Badiana petered out before it could gather momentum.

Having created utter confusion in his rear we turned our fire on the enemy advancing towards Chawinda. At about 1530 hours I overheard on the enemy armour wireless net a commander giving orders for renewing the attack. He was saying, "We are going to form into a column and charge the Pakistani positions. Every one look where I have positioned myself. I am waving my white handkerchief". Before he finished his transmission, he shouted, in Hindi, *in may itni shakti nahin hai.*[1] When I heard these words my immediate reaction was to lower my head and beseech the Almighty for help to show the enemy that we Pakistanis did have the strength to stop them.

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[1]They do not have the strangth to stop us.

What followed was one of the fiercest actions of the whole battle. We kept the Indian column constantly under fire while our armour clashed with enemy armour. When the Indians tried the left flank they were smothered by the concentrated fire of every gun of the Corps artillery. When the enemy could not take more punishment, he withdrew in utter confusion and disorder. The moment the enemy tanks turned tail, 25 Cavalry gave them a hot chase as usual until the enemy tanks hid themselves in sugarcane fields. It was at this moment that I heard one of their tank commanders saying on the wireless, "I wish someone would stop our infantry (from running back)". It was a moment to remember.

The Air O.P. pilot who directed the Corps artillery fire throughout the battle displayed extraordinary courage and presence of mind. He kept directing our fire till late in the evening and did not give up until the attack was finally beaten back and he had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy retreating. We pounded Alhar, and Wazirwali and other places where we knew the enemy would be licking his wounds.

Our headquarter at that time was in a school building on the outskirts of Pasrur on the Pasrur-Chawinda Road along which our regiments were deployed. At about sunset the battle was over and I thought we could now sit back and relax when the Commanding Officer of our locating regiment, Malik Mohammad Ali entered my Command Post with an agitated look on his face and told me that the Indian tanks had entered the town. I was taken aback and refused to believe him because I had been following the enemy actions on their wireless nets and was certain that they had retreated but Malik Ali's reply was that he had seen with his own eyes a squadron of enemy tanks behind the rear boundary wall of the school building in which our Headquarter Post was sited.

For a moment I thought that may be while we were fighting the enemy's frontal attacks, another enemy force had made a wide outflanking move between the Degh Nadi and our defences and appeared in our rear. But somehow I did not believe it or may be I did not want to believe it. I said to myself that if it was true, may be this was the end. I told Lt. Col. Malik Mohammad Ali to come with me and show me the Indian tanks. When we came close enough to the wall

behind which I could see the tanks in the failing light, I discovered that these were our own tanks which had come back for refueling. However, I had learnt my lesson and resolved never again to use a building for my headquarter. I immediately moved my headquarter out of the normal school building and sited it in the open. It is all right for higher headquarters like Corps and Army which are well back in the rear to be housed in buildings but in the battle area, you feel as if you are trapped in the four walls of the building.

Our patrolling on night 15/16 September gave some idea of the damage enemy had suffered from our fire. Area between Khanpur Saidan, Raipur and Sabz Kot were reported by our patrols to be littered with damaged vehicles, wireless sets and ammunition.

Infantry Position Outflanked

At 0600 hours on 16 September the enemy launched a two pronged attack with his Armoured Division and 6 Mountain Division against Chawinda and to the west of it in the direction of Buttur Dograndi. The whole of that day the gunners strove doggedly to hold the enemy at bay with their fire. The concentrated fire of all our guns which had been reinforced by another 36 self propelled field pieces of Artillery I Armoured Division kept hitting the enemy and made it extremely difficult for him to maintain the momentum of his attack. His losses were heavy and he did not get to Butter Dograndi till 1500 hours. The enemy advance towards Chawinda continued till late in the evening. He was suffering very heavy casualties but appeared to be determined to achieve decisive results and effect a breakthrough towards Pasrur at any cost. By the time it was dark the enemy had succeeded in outflanking our defence West of Chawinda and was trying desperately to move down on the road to Pasrur.

At this point there was virtually nothing between the advancing enemy and our gun area, which was not more than a couple of thousand yards away astride the road. Anxious inquiries from higher Headquarters were pouring into our Command Post and I was asked what I proposed to do to prevent the guns from being overrun by the enemy and it was suggested that I should pull back. When Maj.

Gen. Abrar Hussain, Commander 6 Armoured Division, rang me to say the same thing I asked him not to worry about the guns and he was good enough to say that he was leaving the decision to me. I never had the slightest doubt in my mind about my course of action. I talked to the Adjutants of all the regiments on the fire order line and told them that we were going to fight it out from our present positions and they should get ready to use open sights if necessary.[1]

25 Cavalry fought fiercely to stop the enemy advance towards our gun areas. Our observers aided by star shells never lost track of the enemy and we kept hitting him with massed fires of all our guns at a time until the attack was finally broken. When the enemy started to run back he was caught in our fire which we kept lifting along his route of withdrawal. Illumination of the battle field with star shells fired by field and heavy guns added to the panic in enemy ranks. On this day our 8" horwitzers alone fired 125 pounds per gun[2].

The state of utter helplessness in which the Indians found themselves in the face of our tank and artillery fire and the vast number of casualties suffered by their infantry in particular was revealed by messages passed on their wireless net. Enemy armour commanders were overheard saying to one another that they wished some one would stop their troops from running back and get them under control.

On 15 and 16 September the enemy had mounted one of his most determined and powerful attacks with armour supported by infantry and had tried desperately to breakthrough both towards Pasrur and Badiana. Inspite of our pre-occupation with the attacking tanks and infantry throughout the day, we managed to engage 20 hostile batteries and silenced them. The enemy artillery was kept on the run. Their gunners were too busy shifting their positions in search of safety to give effective support to their infantry and armour. They also spent bulk of their artillery effort in trying to neutralise our guns but their counter bombardment was poor and rarely succeeded in forcing us to shift our positions.

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1 An emergency measure when guns have to be used for firing at point blank range by pointing the barrels at the target. Normally the barrels are raised to elevations corresponding to the distance to the targets which are not visible from the guns.

2 8" shell weighs 200 pounds.

On 17th September the enemy, who had lodged himself in Buttur Dograndi on the previous day was kept under fire during the night. In the morning Buttur Dograndi was attacked by our infantry and captured. In the evening the enemy managed to re-capture Buttur Dograndi but somehow we did not get to know about it. During the night when enemy launched his last major attack on Chawinda and fire of Corps artillery was called on Buttur Dograndi we were hesitant to engage it because we were under the impression that it was still with us.

Corps artillery also supported 7 Frontier Force and 14 Frontier Force who were ordered to capture Jassoran and Janewal. It appears that although we captured these objectives we vacated them soon after.

Enemy artillery was not very active on this day. Only 12 hostile batteries fired during the whole day with which we dealt effectively. By now the demand for artillery fire along the whole front was so heavy that guns were firing day and night with very little interval between one engagement and another. Our observers with armour were calling for fire ceaselessly. In addition, the air observer engaged any enemy tank that he could pick up anywhere on the front. This imposed tremendous strain on our gunners particularly the gun crews but their accuracy and the speed of firing remained unaffected throughout the whole battle.

Night Attack

On night 17/18 September the Indian's mounted their last major attack to take Chawinda. For this they used their I Armoued Divisions and 6 Mountain Division. To ensure success they also had two brigades from 14 Infantry Division under command to enable them to smash our defences with sheer weight of numbers. Enemy started heavy shelling of our forward defence line in Chawinda at midnight. We immediately retaliated and engaged every hostile battery which opened up. The artillery duel lasted for about one and a half hour after which the enemy launched his attack. The Indian had been using their armour at night to creep forward but this was the first time they employed bulk of their armour at night in support of a set piece attack. Their aim seemed to be to let loose their armour after the infantry had secured road

Chawinda-Pasrur. It was a bold move aimed at rolling up the left flank of 24 Infantry Brigade and over-running our gun areas and breaking out towards Pasrur.

While we were still busy with counter bombardment, the enemy contacted our positions west of Chawinda and soon after I heard Commander 24 Brigade on the command net saying that his position in the area of railway station had been out-flanked and the enemy had reached road Chawinda-Pasrur. The situation was very cofnused and we were not sure whether we could engage targets on the ground which we thought was held by our own troops. Considerable confusion was also created in our gun area by elements of infantry which had fallen back. Our units were instructed not to pay any attention to what they were saying and continue to fire. I told them on the fire order line that we were going to beat back the enemy with our fire and if necessary we will engage him with open sights. 31 Field and I (S.P.) Field Regiments being the forward most units were faced with the immediate threat. When Headquarter I Corps enquired what was I doing to save our guns from being overrun by the enemy I told them that we were going to remain in action in our present position. In the meantime I (S.P.) Field Regiment reported to our Command Post that their Commanding Officer who was in my Headquarter had told them on his own to get the guns out. I ordered them to stay put. To convince me of the imminent threat to his guns the Second-in-Command of I (S.P.) Regt. asked me to talk on telephone to a battalion Havaldar Major who was in their gun position and who wanted to inform me about the extreme gravity of the situation and tell me that their position in Chawinda had been over-run and they had fallen back. I refused to speak to him and told the Second-in-Command of the Regiment to ignore what he was saying. The Second-in-Command, Major Rashid, when told to take charge of the situation displayed extraordinary courage and presence of mind. He went forward to the road to get first hand information about the enemy, occupied a position on the high ground and directed the fire of the whole Corps artillery. The enemy was already moving on the road Chawinda-Pasrur and was hardly 1500 from our forward most gun positions when he was pinned down by the concentrated

fire of whole of Corps artillery, all the guns hitting him at one point at the same time firing at rate 'intense'.[1]

The hell which was thus let loose on the enemy forced him to abandon his attack and run back for safety. We kept the withdrawing enemy under fire who was struck with such terror that one of his infantry companies which was caught in our fire preferred to surrender rather than go through the shells bursting in front of them. Enemy's will to fight had been broken and he did not dare to launch another set piece attack again. He had used maximum force comprising two infantry divisions and I Armoured Division, the pride of the Indian army, to crack a defensive position held by one Pakistan Infantry Brigade and supporting armour and artillery, and had failed to blow a hole through it.

Later on I learnt that when G.H.Q. received the report of Indian break through in Chawinda that night, their immediate reaction was to order the armoured Brigade Ex I Armoured Division to move to Gujranwala. This brigade had been placed on call to Commander 10 Div. in Lahore for employment in an emergency. Commander 10 Div. did not release the armoured brigade. Situation on his front was reported to be very grave and G.H.Q. was told that some Indian tanks had crossed over the BRB Canal through the syphon and were heading towards Lahore. I was told later that actually the tanks which had been seen in the area of the syphon which created this panic were our own tanks which had been mistaken for enemy tanks.

Corps artillery also supported 3 Frontier Force attack on Buttur Dograndi which was recaptured in the morning. Later in the evening when 3 Frontier Force advanced towards Jassoran massed fire of Corps artillery was put on it before they went in. Attack on Fatehpur by 20 Baluch was also supported by whole of Corps artillery with similar results. A counter attack on this position by the enemy at night was repulsed with the help of artillery fire. At about 1400 hours enemy infantry was observed advancing east of Chawinda towards 2 Punjab position. They were immediately

1 The highest rate of firing which is not normally used because of the increased ammunition expenditure and abnormal wear of the barrels of the guns. It was a desperate measure.

engaged and the attack repulsed before the enemy could get close to our forward positions. 24 hostile batteries were engaged during the day and silenced.

By 19 September the enemy had very little fight left in him and his activity was mainly confined to shelling our gun areas and our forward positions. We engaged 42 Hostile Batteries on 19 September and 45 hostile batteries on 20 September. The enemy fired his artillery most of the time by batteries. As soon as we silenced one battery, another opened up from a different position.

On 21 September I was summoned to Headquarter 6 Armoured Division and a counter attack in area Bhagowal was planned for the morning of 22 September. Complete neutralization of the objective area was guaranteed. Medium and heavy guns were moved during the night to area Badiana to support the attack. Maximum support from Artillery 15 Division to augment our fire was also laid on. By 2200 hours all arrangements had been completed and fire plans were being issued to Liaison Officers in our Command Post when Corps Headquarter informed us that the attack had been cancelled. Had the attack gone in as planned, there was every chance of the enemy vacating a large portion of our territory which remained in his occupation at the time of ceasefire.

On 22 September upto 1200 hours there was very little enemy activity. An enemy mechanised column was attacked with our long range guns and a number of vehicles and tanks were hit. In the evening 6 to 8 enemy tanks were observed advancing South-east of Chawinda towards Seowal. This appeared to be the enemy's last attempt before the ceasefire to extend the salient occupied by him. These tanks were promptly engaged with artillery fire and forced to withdraw. One enemy tank was destroyed and another damaged.

Soon after mid-day the enemy artillery became very active and kept firing from different battery positions upto 0300 hours the following night when ceasefire came into force. To prevent casualties to our troops from enemy shelling a total of 64 hostile batteries were engaged by Corps artillery in less than 15 hours. This was the severest test to which our counter bombardment

organisation had been put so far. On this last day of fighting the Indian gunners appeared to be determined to make us feel the weight of numbers, but with the immaculate locations provided by our sound rangers and the prompt response from the guns, 4 Corps artillery was able to maintain its superiorty to the last minute. This was the climax of our duel with Indian gunners which started on 15 August. In Chhamb and Jaurian our counter bombardment had so paralysed them that they had to abandon most of their guns in action. In Chawinda three Divisional Artillery Brigades and a Corps Artillery supported the Indian offensive but even with their 4 to 1 numerical superiority they still found themselves outclassed by our gunners.

10

WAR OF 1971

Debacle in East Pakistan

The catastrophic events of 1971 which took place in the eastern wing of Pakistan left everyone aghast. For those of us who had participated in the September 1965 war it was difficult to understand how the Pakistan army which had proved itself in the battlefields of West Pakistan could have been humbled by the same adversary in East Pakistan. This painful comparison kept gnawing at the mind constantly and one could not stop wondering about the causes of this debacle.

Without first hand knowledge of the operational situation before and during the war which Pakistan army had to face in East Pakistan, one would hesitate to comment on the events in that wing which led to its separation from the mother country. It is for the senior military commanders who were in East Pakistan during those eventful days to lift the curtain from this tragedy which resulted in a humiliating defeat for us and destroyed the unity of our country. Knowing the Pakistani soldiers, I find it hard to believe that their will to fight could have reached a breaking point towards the end inspite of the most trying conditions which they had to endure for many months before the Indian army invaded East Pakistan. Pakistani soldiers do not give up easily. One cannot help thinking that had there been a civil government in the saddle, the events

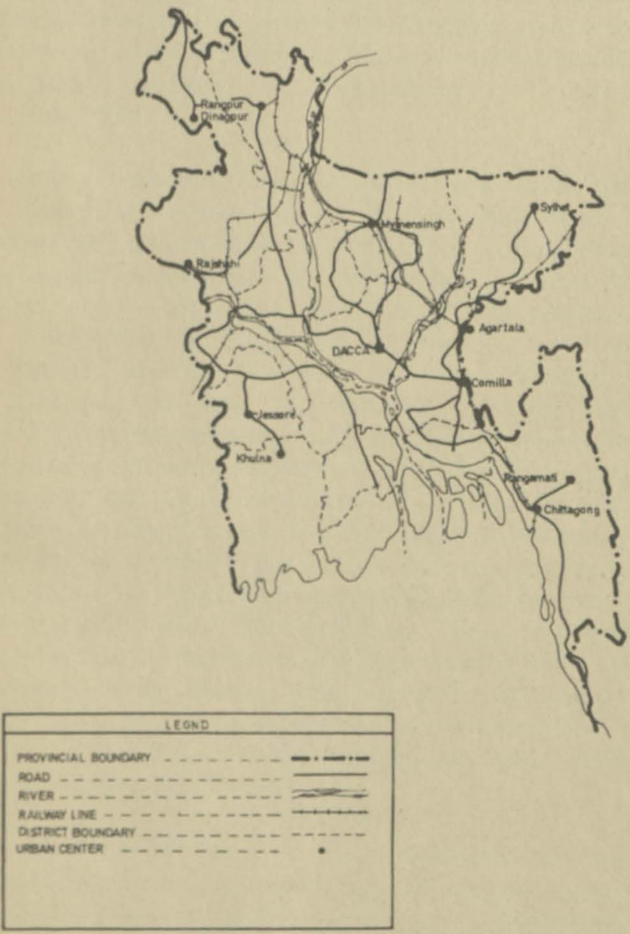
might have followed a different course. The delicate situation in East Pakistan created by Mujibur Rehman and his co-conspirators demanded imaginative handling and not the bullheaded line of action which was adopted. It was basically a political problem to which a political solution should have been found.

If Gen. Yahya blundered in the political sphere and Pakistan was dismembered as a result of it, it could be attributed to the fact that he took upon himself a task for which he had neither the training nor the experience or even a natural flare as Ayub seemed to have. What is, however, hard to understand is how Gen. Yahya with his professional background mishandled the military side of the situation. He appears to have ignored the obvious strategic imperative that the Pakistan army should not allow itself to get involved in all out war with India which would remain confined to East Pakistan. That is why Pakistan had declared more than once that the war for the defence of East Pakistan would be fought in West Pakistan. Keeping in view our resources and the vast distance between the two wings of our country, we were forced to adopt this strategic doctrine. The ability to concentrate forces to achieve local superiority is of paramount importance when fighting against an aggressor who enjoys overall numerical and material superiority. The distance between the two wings of the country and the lack of capability to air lift troops and heavy equipment during the war precluded the necessary flexibility to move forces rapidly from one wing to the other.

The political environment in East Pakistan did not warrant the adoption of a course of action which could give India an excuse to intervene militarily. It should have been foreseen that, in case India invaded East Pakistan, the subversive elements in East Pakistan would stab our troops in the back while they were engaged in fighting. As it happened, the Pakistan army in East Pakistan found itself fighting not only against the Indian army but also against the hordes of Mukti Bahni who tampered with their lines of communication and committed every conceivable act of sabotage. It should have been obvious that India was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to exploit the political situation in East Pakistan and would use it as a pretext for the invasion of East Pakistan.

SECTOR

EAST PAKISTAN



In his painstaking analysis of the situation during the crisis in East Pakistan, Major General Fazal Muqueem Khan in his book 'Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership'[1] has brought out that no written operational instruction was issued to Lieut. Gen. Niazi, the Commander of Pakistan Forces in East Pakistan. One gets the impression from his account that General Yahya Khan and his advisers treated the whole affair so lightly that they could not be bothered to give clear-cut orders or instructions to Lieut. Gen. Niazi. Having known Gen. Yahya and having worked with him I find it hard to believe that he did not think it necessary to do so. On the contrary, I am inclined to think that he avoided it deliberately because he could see that it was no longer feasible to prevent the fall of East Pakistan and he wanted to disown the responsibility for it and shift it to Lt. Gen. Niazi.

If it was too much to issue a detailed operatonal instruction to Lt. Gen. Niazi the least that our General Staff could have done was to spell out in clearcut words the mission which he was to execute in the event of the invasion of East Pakistan by India. What could be the mission which would have acted as a loadstone for Niazi and on which he could have based his detailed plan for the defence of East Pakistan? Obviously it could not have been the destruction of the Indian army invading East Pakistan because that was clearly beyond his capabilities considering the serious limitations on his freedom of action due to insurgency and the resources made available to him. If his mission had been to defend the whole of East Pakistan at all costs, then again with the resources at his disposal, especially fire power and air cover, and considering the size of the territory and the nature of its terrain, it was equally beyond his capabilities. Taking all the factors into consideration, his mission should have required him to defend East Pakistan's border areas as long as possible and impose maximum delay on the enemy to enable him to conduct controlled withdrawal of his forces and concentrate them around Dacca which then had to be defended at all costs.

Of all the operations of war, withdrawal is the most difficult one and requires not only meticulous planning and preparations but

[1] Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqueem Khan, 'Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership', National Book Foundation, Islamabad, 1973.

also leadership of the highest order to execute it. It also demands skilful use of available fire power to enable the withdrawing forces to effect a clean break and not get involved in a running fight which can turn into a rout and also run the risk of being by-passed and having the routes of withdrawal cut. Considering the paucity of fire power (I have heard that a field battery of artillery, which is the smallest sub-unit, was strung over miles) and the interference with their line of communication by Mukti Bahni guerillas operating in their rear, the withdrawal operation was bound to run into difficulties and the chances of its orderly conduct were anything but bright.

The magnitude of the task with which the Commander in East Pakistan was likely to be faced demanded that a senior Lieut. General should have been sent instead of hurriedly promoting a Major General and entrusting him with the responsibility of looking after what was likely to turn into an independent theatre of war.

One of the most serious handicaps with which Lt. Gen. Niazi must have been faced was the inadequacy of air cover. Guerilla operations are the only type of warfare in which there is some chance of limited success without proper air support because of the clandestine mode in which these are carried out. But successful conduct of operations in regular warfare against an enemy who enjoys complete supermacy in the air is extremely difficult. Considering that the troops which had been despatched from West Pakistan during the emergency arrived there virtually without heavy support arms like artillery, the lack of adequate air cover made it well nigh impossible to save East Pakistan against the Indian invasion which was tailor-made for a quick victory. The use of large number of Russian helicopters in the vicinity of Dacca by the Indians should give an idea of how carefully the whole operation had been planned by them and how well the Indian army was equipped for their task.

Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqeem Khan in his book has discussed the operational plan drawn up by G.H.Q. for the defence of East Pakistan[1]. According to him the emphasis was on pacification of the population and the security of borders to

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1 'Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership, opt. cit. page 110.

prevent incursions by rebels who were being trained and armed in India. The requirements of the pacification of the local population and sealing of the long border were obviously quite different from those of defence of East Pakistan in the case of a full scale invasion by India. While the former forced dispersion, the latter would have relied on the ability to concentrate forces at selected points to meet enemy's main thrusts. A plan emanating from these two aims with their conflicting requirements was foredoomed. If all the pacification tasks had been achieved as stated by Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqeem Khan, then there should have been a second plan based purely on operational considerations to which the army should have switched over to defend East Pakistan against the Indian invasion. If the Pakistan army remained in the same posture which it had adopted for pacification tasks, when the Indian invasion came, they were bound to be caught on the wrong foot.

A secure base from which forces can operate is a pre-requisite for successful conduct of operations. This was obviously not available to our troops in East Pakistan. It was an important factor which should have weighed against precipitating the political situation to a point that gave India the opportunity to intervene in East Pakistan militarily. It should have imposed caution and made General Yahya and his advisors realise that a political solution of the situation in East Pakistan was not only the most sensible course to adopt but also a military necessity.

The gross disparity which was likely to exist between the relative strengths of Pakistan army in East Pakistan and the invading Indian army would have discouraged even the most reckless planners from following a course which was likely to lead to Indian invasion of East Pakistan. It appears that the plan for the defence of East Pakistan visualised that India will use five to six divisions to invade East Pakistan. This was an under-estimate because actually India used three Army Corps consisting of eight divisions with four armoured regiments. Apparently our planners believed that with the quantum of forces available to them, they would be able to hold the attackers at bay until some decisive results were achieved in West Pakistan which will produce a stalemate. In this they made the grave error ot under-estimating the importance of artillery. The two infantry divisions, 9 Infantry Division and 16 Infantry Division,

which were hurriedly airlifted from West Pakistan, were despatched without their heavy support weapons including artillery. This might have been acceptable if the only task they were required to perform was that of internal security or pacification as it was called. But for the purpose of defence of East Pakistan against Indian invasion, without artillery, their effectiveness was fractional. A division is a balanced team of all arms of which artillery is a major component. Take away the artillery and what you have left is a force which may be capable of coping with an internal security situation or say guerilla warfare, but it is certainly not fit for a conventional war. By relying on these two additional divisions minus their artillery to contain the Indian offensive of five or six infantry divisions, our planners lulled themselves into a false sense of security. A more realistic appraisal of comparative strengths would have discouraged them from following a course which relied purely on use of force for dealing with the situation with which Pakistan was confronted in East Pakistan.

After our experience of fighting Indian aggression in 1965, there could be no excuse for under-rating the importance of artillery and launching two of our infantry divisions in war without their guns. As there was a distinct possibility of war with India in East Pakistan, the guns of these divisions should have been air lifted or in any case despatched by sea at the same time as the troops emplaned for East Pakistan. These infantry divisions left towards the end of March and the shooting war with India did not start until the end of October which would have allowed enough time for the guns to join their formations.

According to Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqeem Khan, Indian intentions of attacking East Pakistan became obvious in August, 1971, that is not until India started shelling our border posts. If it was so, then in the light of statements made by the Indian C-in-C after the war in which he has revealed that planning and preparations for the invasion of East Pakistan had started in March, 1971, it was an unforegivable failure of our intelligence agencies that we did not find it out until August. In this they repeated their performance of 1965 when we got no inkling of Indian plans to launch their major offensive from the direction of Samba until they crossed our border at Charwa and we learnt about the offensive being spearheaded by the

Indian I Armoured Division from a copy of the operation order found in an Indian tank destroyed in the first encounter.

Some vital decisions must have been taken by our planners at the earliest stage after determining what was possible and what was not possible in East Pakistan. Their decisions were apparently not based on the hard realities of the situation but reflected their wishful thinking from which they drew wrong conclusions. They did not foresee that by stepping up military action to quell disturbances, we will alienate not only world opinion but also those East Pakistanis who were likely to change sides to flout the use of excessive force against their people. The loyalty of all East Pakistan military and para-military troops should not have been taken for granted. The High Command failed to appreciate that it would not be possible for the troops available in East Pakistan to perform the dual role of counter-insurgency and at the same time defend East Pakistan against a full-fledged Indian invasion. They failed to face the fact that with the available resources and the prevailing operational environment it would not be possible to contain an invasion of East Pakistan by India. If they had the courage to accept these hard realities, they would have irresistably come to the conclusion that the situation in East Pakistan warranted a different approach alt-together.

We played into the hands of the Indians by not facing the fact that they will not miss any opportunity to undo Pakistan and that the anti-Pakistan movement launched by Mujibur Rehman was being masterminded from Delhi and was a part of the over-all Indian plan to achieve this national objective. They succeeded in manipulating a set of circumstances which from their point of view justified military intervention and won a cheap victory by pouncing upon East Pakistan when they were sure that Pakistan Army did not have the capability to prevent them from over-running it.

It has been said that as the crisis in East Pakistan deepened and the end drew nearer Lieut. Gen. Niazi was given the impression by the Army C-in-C that some foreign power was about to intervene on our behalf. Apparently Lieut. Gen. Niazi swallowed this and not only he but also his subordinate commanders scanned the sky in the hope that air borne troops in foreign uniforms will appear on the

scene and fight for us or a foreign naval task force will appear on the horizon and come to our rescue. It is not known whether the Army C-in-C had any real reason for holding out this promise but if it was done to boost up Niazi's morale so that he might hold out a little longer, it was the sadest part of the whole tragedy of East Pakistan. If we needed time desperately so that we could go to the Security Council before East Pakistan actually fell, all that our High Command had to do was to give clear orders to Niazi to hold out upto a specific date and to fight to the last to carry out these orders. The soldiers think nothing of laying down their lives in the performance of their duty. Our soldiers who were engaged in the fighting in East Pakistan would have done the same if only they had been told clearly what was required of them instead of being cajoled by such a hoax. Every one of them would have preferred to die in the service of Pakistan rather than go through the soul destroying ordeal of one of the most humiliating surrenders in history as Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqeem has rightly called it in his book.

Soon after the tragedy of East Pakistan I had a chance to talk to a non-commissioned officer of Pakistan and I could gauge the feelings of our soldiers about this national disaster. I saw this Havaldar waiting for a bus on the Harike-Lahore Road while I was driving towards Lahore and offered him a lift in my jeep. When I asked him where he was going he told me that he was going home on leave and after a pause he added in a tearful voice that he had to go because of an urgent call from home but he wished he didn't have to go because he felt he could not show his face to his people after what our army had gone through in East Pakistan. In these few words, he portrayed the anguish of every Pakistani who carries to this day the deep scars of the wound inflicted on the heart of the Pakistani nation by an implacable foe aided by our own inept leadership.

Half-hearted War in West Pakistan

The fighting in West Pakistan which started on 3rd December did not appear to have a well defined aim and was conducted by our High Command in a half-hearted manner. Our holding formations edged forward and in Chhamb decisive results were obtained but when the Indians launched their offensive in the Shakargarh Sector,

our response was limited to an attempt by 18 Div. to advance in Rajastaan Sector with Rampur or Jaisalmir as their objective, this did not proceed according to plan, and the force had to be withdrawn after they had suffered sizeable losses in tanks which were attacked in the open by Indian Air Force. Counter air operation by Pakistan Air Force could not be mounted because of lack of co-ordination between the services. If we had hoped that the fighting in West Pakistan would influence the course of events in East Pakistan at that late stage our appreciation of the overall situation was less than realistic. There was no question of the Indians switching over any ground forces from East to West at that stage and by then they must have been fully prepared to meet any situation which might develop on their western borders. The fact that we did not commit our main offensive force in West Pakistan clearly showed that we had changed our mind and we did not seek any decisive results. Perhaps it was just as well because by that time our High Command had lost it grip over the situation and were apparently seized with indecision and panic. An all out war with India on the western front under these condicions would have been a hazardous undertaking to say the least.

There are many lessons for us to learn from the 1971 War. The most important of these for us as a nation is the vital necessity of becoming self sufficient in our basic defence requirements. We must get over our weakness for wishful thinking and face the fact that the only real strength with which we can safeguard the integrity of our borders is our own strength. While we should go all-out to seek the friendship of likeminded people any where in the world, we must never lose sight of this basic imperative of our existence as an independent nation.

After the September, 1965 War an officer of our ordnance corps told me that he had been sent to a friendly country during the emergency to get some essential items of military hardware. When he presented the list of these items to his hosts, it was put aside and he was told to forget about the list and go around their depots and take whatever Pakistan required in its hour of need. I was deeply moved when I heard about this generous and heart-warming response to our call for help. The value of such friends cannot be overrated especially those with whom

we are bound with ties of common faith, history and culture. We know they will stand by us through thick and thin but it should not lull us into thinking that there is any substitute for self sufficiency and self reliance. No sacrifice should be considered too great while striving for the attainment of this goal because in the final analysis our survival as an independent nation will depend on this more than anything else.

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THE INDIAN NUCLEAR THREAT

On 18th May 1974 India tested its first atom bomb in Rajasthan and there was countrywide rejoicing in India on her entry into the so called nuclear club. It was an event of immense importance not only for the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent but for the whole world. For Pakistan, it was no surprise because it had been known for quite sometime that India was engaged in an all-out effort to develop the capability to produce nuclear weapons. India's refusal to join the non-proliferation accord had left no doubt about India's intentions.

Possession of nuclear capability as a means of mass destruction by India has seriously upset the balance of power in this region and poses a serious threat to her neighbours especially to those smaller countries who have unresolved issues awaiting settlement with her and who have been hoping all along to arrive at a peaceful resolution of these differences. India's claim that it is making atom bombs for use for "peaceful purposes" cannot be taken seriously. Atoms for peace is a laudable motive but atom bombs for peace is a different story altogether. India's space programme is likewise a programme for development of means of delivery of nuclear weapons.

We have to face the fact that the country which is most seriously affected by this development is Pakistan. The remarkable restraint which Pakistan has shown in this grave situation is a measure

of the confidence of her people to face any challenge to their existence regardless of the magnitude of the threat. As a matter of fact Pakistan has already made up its mind on the course of action it proposes to adopt to meet this situation. Pakistan has decided to opt for a peaceful struggle to prevent India from manufacturing nuclear weapons and using them as an instrument of her foreign policy. She has resolved not to attempt to match atom bombs with atom bombs. Pakistan is not lagging behind India in scientific and technological advance. India is a much bigger country than Pakistan but then it should not be forgotten that it has many more mouths to feed. Pakistan can ill afford to divert her limited resources from her development programme to improve the lot of her people, but it is not altogether inconceivable that for sheer self-preservation she could also muster enough resources to embark upon a nuclear programme similar to the one currently going on in India if she was convinced that there was no other course open to her.

The history of warfare is in part the history of development of the weapons to wage war. Whenever a country has come up with a new weapon, people threatened by it have lost no time in developing an effective weapon to neutralise its advantage to the potential aggressor. But an atom bomb is not just a weapon; it is much more. Its use need not be confined to the battlefield. If the country which has nuclear weapons feels that nuclear strikes on centres of population, communication centres and industrial bases of her opponent will ensure a quick victory without losses to its own side, there is no valid reason to assume that she will desist from doing so. A country with a small number of atomic weapons is more likely to resort to this course to cripple her opponent with a few fatal blows as compared with countries with large stock piles of these weapons whose response in a nuclear exchange will be more controlled and tailored to achieve specific results. Except super powers who already hold large stock piles of a variety of these weapons for both tactical and strategic use, all other countries who may enter this field in the near future fall in this category. They pose a far greater threat to their potential victims.

So far the world has been spared the horrors of a nuclear holocaust because of the virtual nuclear stalemate between the super

powers. Proliferation of nuclear weapons and especially their acquisitions by countries who are averse to settlements of international disputes by peaceful means is a greater threat to mankind.

Although our Government is seized with the problem posed by the addition of nuclear weapons to India's arsenal, it appears that our people have not yet fully grasped the significance of this development, it is important that they should know that since India is not likely to have a large stockpile of nuclear weapons for sometime to come, it is highly probable that in any armed conflict in the near future the few that they have will be used to inflict maximum damage by their employment against non-military targets. For a country whose strategy is not inhibited by a code of conduct, nuclear strikes on major centres of population, industrial complexes and communication systems are likely to yield better dividends than employment of nuclear weapons in the battlefield. As far as Pakistan is concerned there are two main reasons for this assumption. Firstly, since Pakistan army will be fully prepared and trained to meet the challenge, employment of a limited number of tactical nuclear weapons against them is not likely to yield decisive results. And secondly, as the experience of 1965 Indo-Pakistan war and 1971 war in West Pakistan has shown, major battles between India and Pakistan will be fought astride the borders. It can be safely concluded that India will not use nuclear weapons near her own borders especially when the Pakistan army gets inside Indian territory as it did in West Pakistan in the last two wars. Since during most of the fighting the two armies will be operating close to each other, opportunities for employment of nuclear weapon will be rare.

While hoping that the sub-continent will be spared nuclear devastation it would be prudent to take all possible precautionary measures to meet such an eventuality. To minimize the consequences of possible use of nuclear weapons against our civilian population, one would like to think that a comprehensive plan is in existence.

Underground shelters have received a very high priority in all those countries which are faced with a nuclear threat. With our limited resources we may not be able to emulate their example but there is no reason why it should not be made mandatory that all

new buildings which are constructed in big cities especially shopping centres, offices and factories will have large underground shelters. At the same time to encourage provision of underground cellars in existing buildings in potential target areas, their construction could be subsidized by the Government.

When the problem posed by acquisition of the capability to produce nuclear weapons by India is viewed in all its complexity, Pakistan's decision to counter this threat by peaceful means appears to be the right decision. If sanity prevails, this calculated response of Pakistan should succeed in achieving the desired results. If it does not, it will be for the people of Pakistan to decide what should be their next move to meet this challenge.

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